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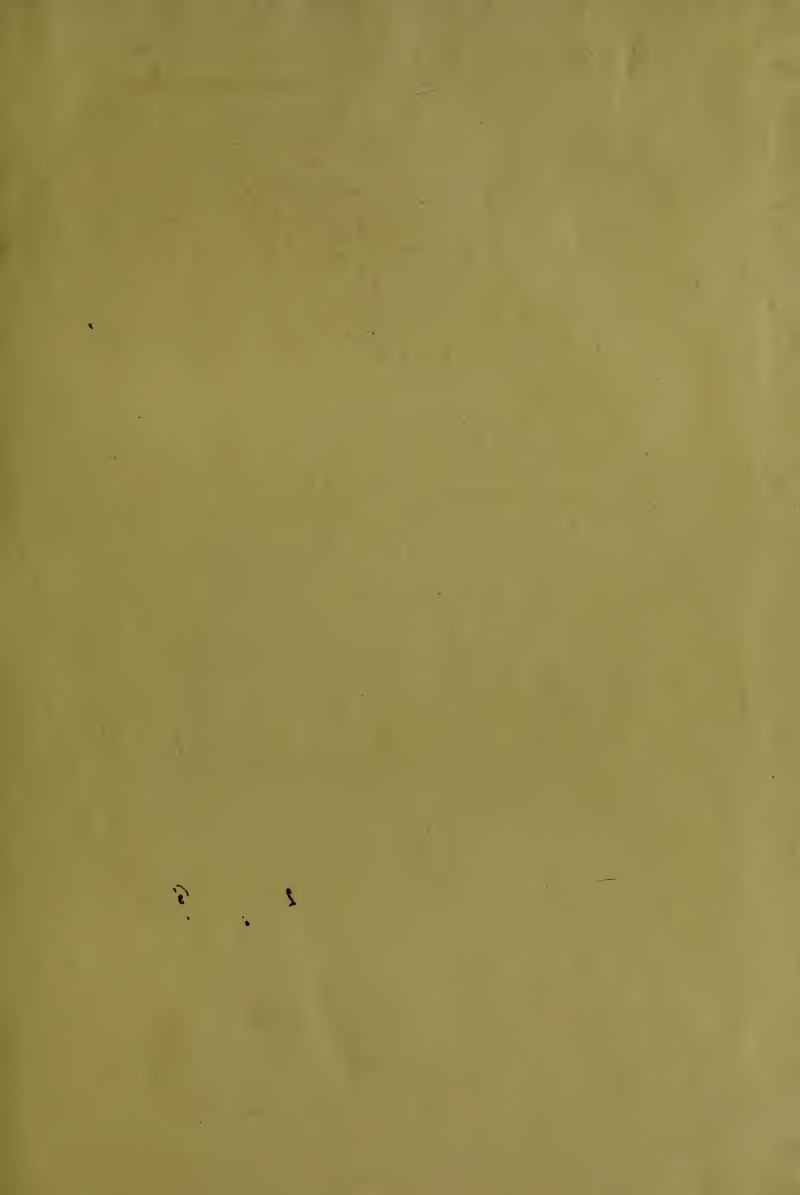
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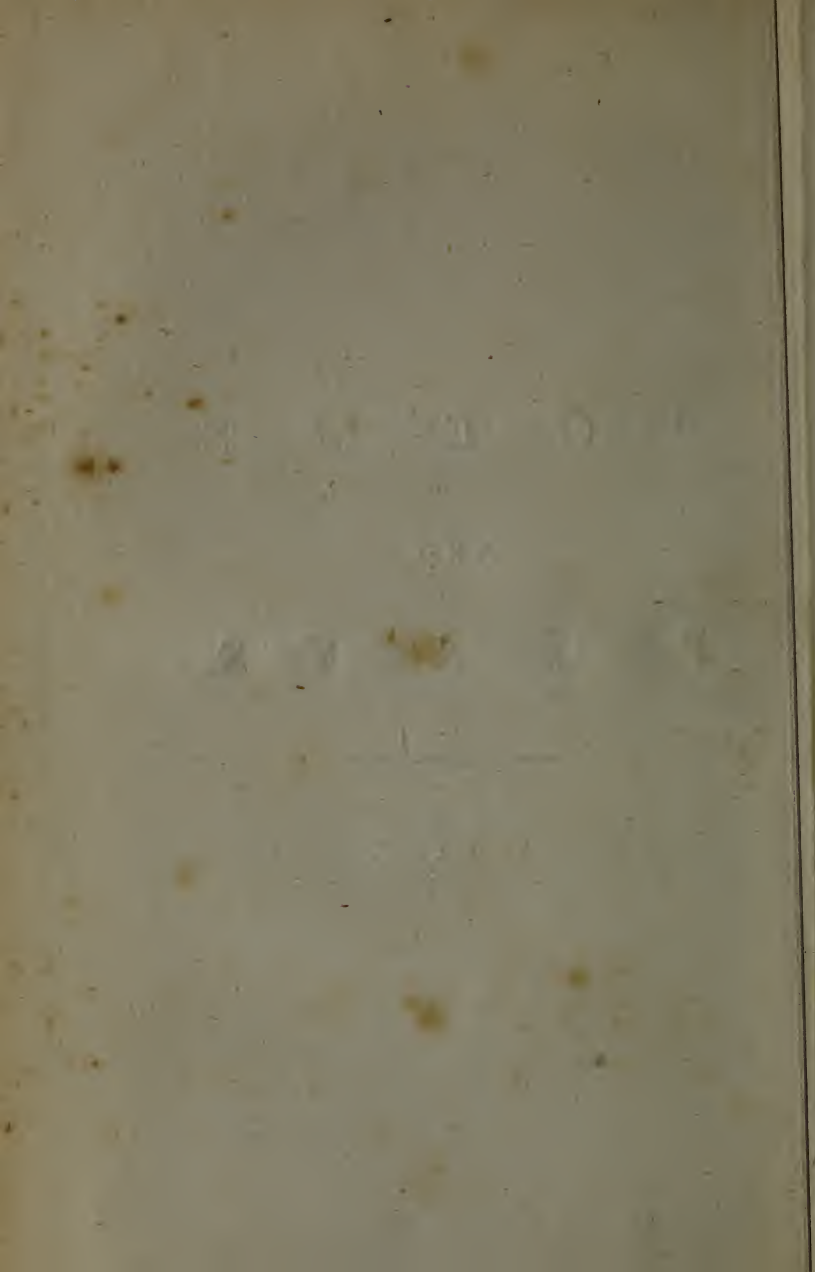


P O E M S

AND

P L A Y S.

V O L. V.



P O E M S

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AND

P L A Y S,

By WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

A NEW EDITION.

VOL. V.

L O N D O N :

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1788

THE
TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER;
A
P O E M:
IN SIX CANTOS.

O VOI CH' AVETE GL' INTELLETTI SANI
MIRATE LA DOTTRINA, CHE SI ASCONDE
SOTTO' IL VELAME DEGLI VERSI STRANI.

DANTE, Inferno, Canto 9.

P R E F A C E.

IT seems to be a kind of duty incumbent on those who devote themselves to Poetry, to raise, if possible, the dignity of a declining Art, by making it as beneficial to Life and Manners as the limits of Composition, and the character of modern Times, will allow. The ages, indeed, are past, in which the song of the Poet was idolized for its miraculous effects; yet a Poem, intended to promote the cultivation of good-humour, may still perhaps be fortunate enough to prove of some little service to society in general; or, if this idea may be thought too chimerical and romantic by sober Reason, it is at least one of those pleasing and innocent delusions, in which a poetical Enthusiast may be safely indulged.

The following production owes its existence to an incident in real life, very similar to the principal action of

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the last Canto; but in forming the general plan of the work, it seemed to me absolutely necessary to introduce both the agency and the abode of SPLEEN, notwithstanding the difficulty and the hazard of attempting a subject so happily executed by the masterly pencil of Pope. I considered his Cave of Spleen as a most exquisite cabinet picture; and, to avoid the servility of imitation, I determined to sketch the mansion of this gloomy Power on a much wider canvass: Happy, indeed, if the judgment of the Public may enable me to exclaim, with the honest vanity of the Painter, who compared his own works to the divine productions of Raphael,

“ E son Pittore anch’ Io !”

The celebrated Alessandro Tassoni, who is generally considered as the inventor of the modern Heroi-comic Poetry, was so proud of having extended the limits of his art by a new kind of composition, that he not only spoke of it with infinite exultation in one of his private letters, but even gave a MS. copy of his work to his native city of Modena, with an inscription, in which he stiled it a new species of Poetry, invented by himself.

A few

A few partial friends have asserted, that the present performance has some degree of similar merit ; but as I apprehend all the novelty it possesses, may rather require an apology, than entitle its Author to challenge commendation, I shall explain how far the conduct of the Poem differs from the most approved models in this mode of writing, and slightly mention the poetical effects, which such a variation appeared likely to produce.

It is well known, that the favourite Poems, which blend the serious and the comic, represent their principal characters in a satirical point of view : It was the intention of Tassoni (though prudence made him attempt to conceal it) to satirize a particular Italian Nobleman, who happened to be the object of his resentment. Boileau openly ridicules the French Ecclesiastics in his Lutrin ; Garth, our English Physicians, in his Dispensary ; and the Rape of the Lock itself, that most excellent and enchanting Poem, which I never contemplate but with new idolatry, is denominated the best Satire extant, by the learned Dr. Warton, in his very elegant and ingenious, but severe, Essay on Pope : A sentence which seems to be confirmed by the Poet himself, in his letter to Mrs. Fermor, where he says, “the cha-

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“ *raēter of Belinda, as it is now managed, resembles*
 “ *you in nothing but in beauty.*” Though I think, that
 no composition can surpass, or perhaps ever equal this
 most happy effort of Genius, as a sportive Satire, I ima-
 gined it might be possible to give a new Character to this
 mixed species of Poetry, and to render it by its Object,
 though not in its Execution, more noble than the most
 beautiful and refined Satire can be. We have seen it
 carried to inimitable perfection, in the most delicate
 raillery on Female Foibles :—It remained to be tried, if
 it might not also aspire to delineate the more engaging
 features of Female Excellence. The idea appeared to
 me worth the experiment ; for, if it succeeded, it seemed
 to promise a double advantage ; first, it would give an
 air of novelty to the Poem ; and, secondly, what I
 thought of much greater importance, it would render it
 more interesting to the heart. On these principles, I
 have endeavoured to paint SERENA as a most lovely, en-
 gaging, and accomplished character ; yet I hope the co-
 louring is so faithfully copied from general Nature,
 that every man, who reads the Poem, may be happy
 enough to know many Fair ones, who resemble my
 Heroine.

There

There is another point, in which I have also attempted to give this Poem an air of novelty : I mean, the manner of connecting the real and the visionary scenes, which compose it ; by shifting these in alternate Cantos, I hoped to make familiar Incident and allegorical Picture afford a strong relief to each other, and keep the attention of the Reader alive, by an appearance particularly diversified. I wished, indeed (but I fear most ineffectually) for powers to unite some touches of the sportive wildness of Ariosto, and the more serious sublime painting of Dante, with some portion of the enchanting elegance, the refined imagination, and the moral graces of Pope ; and to do this, if possible, without violating those rules of propriety, which Mr. Cambridge has illustrated, by example as well as precept, in the Scribleriad, and in his sensible Preface to that elegant and learned Poem.

I have now very frankly informed my Reader of the extent, or rather the extravagance of my desire ; for I will not give it the serious name of design : They, whom an enlightened taste has rendered thoroughly sensible how very difficult it must be to accomplish such an idea, will not only be the first to discern, but the most

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ready to pardon those errors, into which so hazardous an attempt may perhaps have betrayed me. I had thoughts of introducing this performance to the Public, by a Dissertation of considerable length on this species of Poetry; but I forbear to indulge myself any farther in such preliminary remarks, as the anxiety of authors is so apt to produce, from the reflection, that, however ingeniously written, they add little or nothing to the success of a good Poem, and are utterly insufficient to prevent that neglect, or oblivion, which is the inevitable fate of a bad one.

In dismissing a work to my Fair Readers, which is intended principally for their perusal, I shall only recommend it to their attention; and bid them farewell, in the words of the pleasant and courteous Tassoni—

“ Vaglia il buon voler, s’ altro non lice,

“ E chi la leggera, viva felice!”

EARTHAM,

Jan. 31, 1781.

THE
T R I U M P H S
OF
T E M P E R.

C A N T O I.

THE mind's soft guardian, who, tho' yet unsung,
Inspires with harmony the female tongue,
And gives, improving every tender grace,
The smile of angels to a mortal face;
Her powers I sing; and scenes of mental strife, 5
Which form the maiden for th' accomplish'd wife;
Where the sweet victor sees, with sparkling eyes,
Love her reward, and happiness her prize.

Daughters

10 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Daughters of beauty, who the song inspire,
 To your enchanting notes attune my lyre ! 10
 And O ! if haply your soft hearts may gain
 Or use, or pleasure from the motley strain,
 Tho' formal critics, with a surly frown,
 Deny your artless bard the laurel crown,
 He still shall triumph, if ye deign to spread 15
 Your sweeter myrtle round his honour'd head.

In your bright circle young SERENA grew ;
 A lovelier nymph the pencil never drew ;
 For the fond Graces form'd her easy mien,
 And heaven's soft azure in her eye was seen. 20
 She seem'd a rose-bud, when it first receives
 The genial sun in its expanding leaves :
 For now she enter'd those important years,
 When the full bosom swells with hopes and fears ;
 When conscious nature prompts the secret sigh, 25
 And sheds sweet languor o'er the melting eye ;
 When nobler toys the female heart trepan,
 And dolls rejected, yield their place to man.

Beneath a father's care SERENA grew ;
 The good SIR GILBERT, to his country true, 30
 A faithful

A faithful Whig, who, zealous for the state,
 In freedom's service led the loud debate ;
 Yet every day, by transmutation rare,
 Turn'd to a Tory in his elbow-chair,
 And made his daughter pay, howe'er absurd, 35
 Passive obedience to his sovereign word.

In his domestic sway he borrow'd aid
 From prim PENELOPE, an ancient maid,
 His upright sister, conscious of her worth,
 Who valued still her beauty, and her birth ; 40
 Tho' from her birth no envied rank she gain'd,
 And of her beauty but the ghost remain'd ;
 A restless ghost ! that with remembrance keen
 Proclaim'd incessant what it once had been ;
 Delighted still the steps of youth to haunt, 45
 To watch the tender nymph, and warm gallant ;
 And, with an eye that petrified pursuit,
 Hang like the dragon o'er th' Hesperian fruit.

Tho' strictly guarded by this jealous power,
 The mild SERENA no restraint could sour : 50
 Pure was her bosom, as the silver lake,
 Ere rising winds the ruffled water shake,

12 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

When the bright pageants of the morning sky,
 Across th' expansive mirror lightly fly,
 By vernal gales in quick succession driven, 55
 While the clear glass reflects the smile of heaven.
 In gay content a sportive life she led,
 The child of Modesty, by Virtue bred :
 Her light companions Innocence and Ease :
 Her hope was pleasure, and her wish to please : 60
 For this, to Fashion early rites she paid ;
 For this, to Venus secret vows she made ;
 Nor held it sin to cast a private glance
 O'er the dear pages of a new romance,
 Eager in fiction's touching scenes to find 65
 A field to exercise her youthful mind :
 The touching scenes new energy imprest
 On all the virtues of her feeling breast.
 Sweet Evelina's fascinating power
 Had first beguil'd of sleep her midnight hour : 70
 Possess'd by sympathy's enchanting sway,
 She read, unconscious of the dawning day.
 The Modern Anecdote was next convey'd
 Beneath her pillow by her faithful maid.

The

THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER. 13

The nymph, attentive as the brooding dove, 75

Por'd o'er the tender scenes of Franzel's love :

The sinking taper now grew weak and pale ;

SERENA sigh'd, and dropt th' unfinish'd tale ;

But, as warm clouds in vernal æther roll,

The soft ideas floated in her soul : 80

Free from ambitious pride, and envious care,

To love, and to be lov'd, was all her prayer :

While these fond thoughts her gentle mind possess'd,

Soft slumber settled on her snowy breast.

Scarce had her radiant eyes began to close, 85

When to her view a friendly vision rose ;

A fairy Phantom struck her mental sight,

Light as the gossamer, as æther bright ;

Array'd like Pallas was the pigmy form,

When the sage Goddess stills the martial storm. 90

Her casque was amber, richly grac'd above

With down, collected from the callow dove :

Her burnish'd breast-plate, of a deeper dye,

Was once the armour of a golden fly :

A lynx's eye her little ægis shone, 95

By fairy spells converted into stone,

And

14 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

And worn of old, as elfin poets sing,
 By Ægypt's lovely queen, a favourite ring :
 Myſterious power was in the magic toy,
 To turn the frowns of care to ſmiles of joy. 100
 Her tiny lance, whoſe radiance ſteam'd afar,
 Was one bright ſparkle from the bridal ſtar.
 A filmy mantle round her figure play'd,
 Fine as the texture, by Arachne laid
 O'er ſome young plant, when glittering to the view
 With many an orient pearl of morning dew. 106
 The Phantom hover'd o'er the conſcious Fair
 With ſuch a lively ſmile of tender care,
 As on her elfin lord Titania caſt,
 When firſt ſhe found his angry ſpell was paſt. 110
 Round her rich locks SERENA chanc'd to tie
 An ample ribband of cærulean dye :
 High o'er her forehead roſe the graceful bow,
 Whoſe arch commanded the ſweet ſcene below :
 The hovering Spirit view'd the tempting ſpot, 115
 And lightly perch'd on this unbending knot ;
 As the fair flutterer, of Pſyche's race,
 Is ſeen to terminate her airy chace,

When,

When, pleas'd at length her quivering wings to close,
Fondly she settles on the fragrant rose. 120

Now in soft notes, more musically clear
Than ever Fairy breath'd in mortal ear,
These words the visionary voice convey'd
To the charm'd spirit of the sleeping maid :

“ Thou darling of my care, whose ripen'd worth
Shall spread my empire o'er the smiling earth ; 126
Whom Nature blest, forbidding modish Art
To cramp thy spirit, or contract thy heart ;
Screen'd from thy thought, nor in thy visions felt,
Long on thy opening mind I've fondly dwelt ; 130
In childhood's sorrows brought thee quick relief,
And dry'd thy April showers of infant grief ;
Taught thee to laugh at the malicious boy,
Who broke thy playthings with a barbarous joy,
To bear what ills the little female haunt, 135 }
The testy nurse, th' imperious governante,
And that tyrannic pest, the prying maiden aunt. }
Now ripening years a nobler scene supply ;
For life now opens on thy sparkling eye :
Thy rising bosom swells with just desire 140
Rapture to feel, and rapture to inspire :

16 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Not the vain blifs, the transitory joys,
 That childifh woman feels, in radiant toys ;
 The coftly diamond, or the lighter pearl,
 The mafive Nabob, or the tinfel Earl. 145
 Thy heart demands, each meaner aim above,
 Th' imperifhable wealth of fterling love ;
 Thy wifh, to pleafe by ev'ry fofter grace
 Of elegance and eafe, of form and face !
 By lively fancy and by fenfe refin'd, 150
 The ftronger magic of the cultur'd mind !
 Thy pure ambition, and thy virtuous plan,
 To fix the variable heart of man !
 Short is the worship paid at beauty's fhrine ;
 But lafting love and happinefs are mine : 155
 Mine, tho' the earth's miftaken, blinded race
 Defpife my influence, and my name debase ;
 Nor breathe one vow to that ætherial friend,
 On whom the colours of their life depend.
 But to thy innocence I'll now display 160
 The myftic marvels of my fecret fway ;
 And tell, in this thy fate-deciding hour,
 My race, my name, my office, and my power.

First

First, hear what wonders human forms contain !
 And learn the texture of the female brain ! 165
 By Nature's care in curious order spread,
 This living net is fram'd of tender thread ;
 Fine, as thy hand, some favour'd youth to grace,
 Knits with nice art to form the mimic lace.
 Within the center of this fretted dome, 170
 Her secret tower, her heaven-constructed home,
 Soft Sensibility, sweet Beauty's soul !
 Keeps her coy state, and animates the whole,
 Invisible as Harmony, who springs,
 Wak'd by young Zephyr, from Æolian strings : 175
 Her subtle power, more delicately fine,
 Dwells in each thread, and lives in every line,
 Whose quick vibrations, without end, impart
 Pleasure and pain to the responsive heart.
 As Zephyr's breath the willing chord inspires, 180
 Whispering soft music to the trembling wires,
 So with fond care I regulate, unseen,
 The softer movements of this nice machine ;
 TEMPER my earthly name, the nurse of Love !
 But call'd SOPHROSYLE in realms above ! 185

18 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

When lovely Woman, perfect at her birth,
 Blest with her early charms the wond'ring earth,
 Her soul, in sweet simplicity array'd,
 Nor shar'd my guidance, nor requir'd my aid.
 Her tender frame, nor confident nor coy, 190
 Had every fibre tun'd to gentle joy :
 No vain caprices swell'd her pouting lip ;
 No gold produc'd a mercenary trip ;
 Soft innocence inspir'd her willing kifs,
 Her love was nature, and her life was blifs. 195
 Guide of his reason, not his passion's prey,
 She tam'd the savage, Man, who blest'd her sway.
 No jarring wishes fill'd the world with woes,
 But youth was ecstacy, and age repose.

The Powers of Mischief met, in dark Divan, 200
 To blast these mighty joys of envied Man :
 The Fiends, at their infernal leader's call,
 Fram'd their base wiles in Demogorgon's hall.
 In the deep center of that dreadful dome,
 An hellish cauldron boil'd with fiery foam : 205
 In this wide urn the circling spirits threw
 Ingredients harsh, and hideous to the view ;

While

While the terrific master of the spell
 With adjurations shook the depths of hell,
 And in dark words, unmeet for mortal ear, 210
 Bade the dire offspring of his art appear.
 Forth from the vase, with fullen murmurs, broke
 A towering mass of pestilential smoke :
 Emerging from this fog of thickest night,
 A Phantom swells, by slow degrees, to fight ; 215
 But ere the view can seize the forming shape,
 From the mock'd eye its lineaments escape :
 It seem'd all passions melted into one,
 Assum'd the face of all, and yet was none :
 Hell stood aghast at its portentous mien, 220
 And shuddering Demons call'd the spectre Spleen.
 ' Hie thee to earth ! ' its mighty master cried,
 ' O'er the vex'd globe in heavy vapours ride !
 Within its center fix thy shadowy throne !
 With shades thy subjects, and that hell thy own ! 225
 Reign there unseen ! but let thy strong controul
 Be hourly felt in Woman's wayward soul !
 With darkest poisons from our deep abyss,
 Taint that pure fountain of terrestrial bliss !

20 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Th' enormous Phantom, at this potent sound, 230
 Roll'd forth obedient from the vast profound :
 The quaking Fiends recover'd from their dread,
 And hell grew lighter, as the monster fled.
 But now round earth the gliding vapours run,
 Blot the rich æther, and eclipse the sun ; 235
 All Nature sickens ; and her fairest flower,
 Enchanting Woman, feels the baneful Power :
 As in her soul the clouds of Spleen arise,
 The sprightly essence of her beauty flies :
 In youth's gay prime, in hours with rapture warm,
 Love looks astonish'd on her altering form : 241
 To pleasing frolics, and enchanting wiles,
 Life-darting looks, and soul-subduing smiles,
 Dark whims succeed : thick-coming fancies fret ;
 The fullen passion, and the hasty pet : 245
 The swelling lip, the tear-distended eye,
 The peevish question, the perverse reply ;
 The moody humour, that, like rain and fire,
 Blends cold disgust with unsubdu'd desire,
 Flies what it loves, and, petulantly coy, 250
 Feigns proud abhorrence of the proffer'd joy :

For

For Nature's artless aim, the wish to please
 By genuine modesty, and simple ease,
 Fashion's pert tricks the crowded brain oppress
 With all the poor parade of tawdry dress : 255

The sickly bosom pants for noise and show,
 For every bauble, and for every beau ;
 The voice, that health made harmony, disowns
 That native charm for languor's mimic tones ;
 And feigns disease, till, feeling what it feigns, 260
 Its fancied maladies are real pains.

Such, and a thousand still superior woes,
 From Spleen's new empire o'er the earth arose :
 Each simple dictate of the soul forgot,
 Then first was form'd the mercenary plot ; 265

And beauty practis'd that pernicious art,
 The art of angling for an old man's heart ;
 Tho' crawling to his bride with tottering knees,
 His words were dotage, and his love disease.

From sex to sex this base contagion ran, 270
 And gold grew beauty in the eyes of man :
 Courtship was traffic : and the married life
 But one loud jangle of incessant strife.

The gentle Sprite, who, on his radiant car,
 Shines the mild regent of the evening-star, 275
 And joys from thence those genial rays to shed,
 That lead the bridegroom to the nuptial bed,
 While earth's new ills his friendly soul absorb,
 From Cynthia call'd me to his kindred orb ;
 And, eager to redress the woes of man, 280
 The brilliant Son of Vesper thus began :
 ' Thou softest Being of th' ætherial kind,
 Be thy benignant cares no more confin'd
 To smooth the ruffled plume of Zephyr's wing,
 To guard from cruel frost the infant spring, 285
 To drive gross atoms from the rays of noon,
 Or chase the halo from the vapourish moon !
 Thy friendly nature will not now deny
 To quit for nobler toils thy native sky ;
 Thou seest how Spleen's infernal vapours roll 290
 Across the sweet serene of woman's soul ;
 And earth, which darkens as her beauties fade,
 Must grow a second hell without thy aid :
 Take then thy station ! fix thy nobler reign
 O'er those fine chords, that form the female brain,

THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER. 23

That us'd, ere injur'd by the rust of Spleen, 296
 To fill with harmony the human scene !
 Go ! lest her touch their tender tones destroy,
 Teach them to vibrate to thy notes of joy !
 Go ! and restore, by stilling mental strife, 300
 Health to faint love, and happiness to life !
 So spake that friend of man, who lights above
 His heavenly lamp of Hymenæal love :
 In his just aim my kindred spirit join'd,
 And flew obedient to the charge assign'd. 305
 Hence, as the bias sways th' unconscious bowl,
 I long unseen have sway'd the careless soul ;
 Tho' oft I feel my power by Spleen subdu'd,
 In the shrill vixen, and the sullen prude,
 In some fair forms my soft dominion grows, 310
 Like fragrance, rising from the opening rose :
 Still I preserve, in many a lovely face,
 That gay good-humour, and that constant grace,
 Which heavenly Powers united to infold
 In perfect Woman's new-created mould ; 315
 When Nature, in her infant beauty blest,
 The last and loveliest of her works carest.

But of those nymphs, who, delicately fair,
 Draw their soft graces from my forming care,
 My young SERENA shines her peers above, 320
 Pride of my hopes, and darling of my love.

Hence I to thee such mysteries unfold,
 As Man's pedantic eye shall ne'er behold ;
 Whose narrow science, tho' it proudly boast
 To pierce the sky, and count the starry host, 325

Sees not the lucid band of airy Powers,
 Who flutter round him in his secret hours :
 But if to me, thy guardian now display'd,
 Thy duteous orisons are justly paid,
 Thou to those realms shalt pass with me thy guide,
 Where Spleen's pale victims, after death, reside ; 331

Then to that orb, in vision shalt thou rise,
 Unseen by mortal astronomic eyes,
 Where I—but first let me thy soul prepare
 To meet our secret foe's insidious snare ! 335

'Tis my fond purpose in thy form to show
 The sweetest model of my skill below :
 A youth I destine to thy dear embrace,
 Crown'd with each mental charm, and manly grace,

With

THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER. 25

With whom thy innocence, secure from strife, 340
Shall reap the beauteous joys of blameless life.

Pleas'd I observe thy little heart begin

To ask, what charms the mighty prize may win :

But know, tho' Elegance herself be seen

To guide thy motion, and to form thy mien ; 345

Tho' Beauty o'er thy filial cheek diffuse

The soft enchantment of her roseate hues,

Not from their favour shall this glory rise !

TEMPER shall singly gain the splendid prize :

The sudden conquest shall be mine alone, 350

And Love with transport shall my triumph own.

Such are my hopes ; but I with pain relate

What hard conditions are annex'd by fate :

As chemic fires, that patient labour blows,

Draw the rich perfume from the Persian rose, 355

So must thou form, by fiery toils refin'd,

The living essence of thy sweeter mind.

Dimly I see, on Destiny's dull glass,

Three dangerous trials 'tis thy doom to pass ;

And oh ! if once forgetful of my power, 360

Good-humour fail thee in the fateful hour,

Farwell

26 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Farewell those joys, that wait the happy wife !
Farewell the vision of unclouded life !

Fain would my love thy secret perils show,
Which fate allows not even me to know : 365

In Spleen's dark court a thousand agents dwell,
Who bind her victims in the wayward spell ;
Perchance three prime supporters of her sway,
The busiest of her fiends, may cross thy way :

Stern Contradiction, her ill-favour'd child, 370

Of fierce demeanor, and of spirit wild,
Bane of delight ! and horror of the sex !

His plan to puzzle, and his pride to vex !—

Or Scandal, filthy hag ! who blindly limps
Round the wide earth, supported by her imps, 375

Her inky demons, who delight to print

Her base suggestion, and her envious hint :—

Or groundless Jealousy, pert changeling ! born
Of amorous Vanity, and angry Scorn,

Whose bitter taunts with public insult dare 380

Basely to wound the unoffending fair,

Proud the sweet joys of innocence to crush,

And spread o'er beauty's cheek the burning blush.

Whether

Whether these kindred fiends, or one or all,
 Shall aim thy airy spirit to enthrall, 385
 Are points, my fondness tries in vain to reach;
 But trust my caution! and beware of each!

Lest to thy lively mind my words may seem
 The vain chimera of a common dream,
 By one unquestionable sign be taught 390
 To prize my presence in thy waking thought!
 An azure ribband, on thy toilet thrown,
 Shall make the magic of my empire known:
 On this thy sportive needle tried its powers,
 And silver spangles form'd the mimic flowers; 395
 On these my love shall breathe a secret charm;
 With this, my castus, thy soft bosom arm!
 Above it let the decent tucker rise,
 To hide the mystic band from mortal eyes!
 When Spleen's dark Powers would teach that breast
 to swell, 400

This guardian cincture shall those Powers repel:
 As the touch'd talisman, more swift than thought,
 To save her charge, th' Arabian Fairy brought;
 So shall this zone, if justly I'm obey'd,
 Bring my soft spirit to thy certain aid. 405

28 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

In Love's great name observe this high behest !
Revere my power—Be gentle, and be blest !”

Here the kind Sprite her friendly counsel clos'd,
And lightly vanish'd—Still SERENA doz'd ;
Still in sweet trance she fondly seem'd to hear 410
The soft persuasion vibrate in her ear.
But waking now far different notes she found ;
Less pleasing echoes in her chamber sound ;
For now the heralds of the London day
Sing their loud mattins in th' uncrowded way ; 415
Th' impatient milk-maid now, with early din,
Screams to the rattle of her pail of tin ;
With sweep's faint cry, and, latest of the crew,
The deep-ton'd music of the murmuring Jew.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

CANTO

C A N T O II.

YE radiant nymphs ! whose opening eyes convey
 Warmth to the world, and lustre to the day !
 Think what o'ershadowing clouds, may cross your
 brain,
 Before those lovely lids shall close again !
 What funds of patience twelve long hours may ask, 5
 When cold Discretion claims her daily task !
 Ah think betimes ! and, while your morning care
 Sheds foreign odours o'er your fragrant hair,
 Tinge your soft spirit with that mental sweet,
 Which may not be exhal'd by passion's heat ; 10
 But charm the sense, with undecaying power,
 Thro' every chance of each diurnal hour !
 O ! might you all perceive your toilets crown'd
 With such cosmetics as SERENA found !
 For, to the warning vision fondly true, 15
 Now the quick fair-one to the toilet flew :

With

30 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

With keen delight her ravish'd eye survey'd
 The mystic ribband on her mirror laid :
 Bright shone the azure as Aurora's car,
 And every spangle seem'd a living star. 20
 With sportive grace the smiling damsel prest
 The guardian cincture to her snowy breast,
 More lovely far than Juno, when she strove
 To look most lovely in the eyes of Jove ;
 And willing Venus lent her every power, 25
 That sheds enchantment o'er the amorous hour :
 For spells more potent on this band were thrown,
 Than Venus boasted in her beauteous zone.
 Her dazzling cæstus could alone inspire
 The sudden impulse of short-liv'd desire : 30
 These finer threads with lasting charms are fraught,
 Here lies the tender, but unchanging thought,
 Silence, that wins, where eloquence is vain,
 And tones, that harmonize the madd'ning brain,
 Soft sighs, that anger cannot hear, and live, 35
 And smiles, that tell, how truly they forgive ;
 And lively grace, whose gay diffusive light
 Puts the black phantoms of the brain to flight,

Whose

Whose cheering powers thro' every period last,
And make the present happy as the past. 40

Such secret charms this richer zone possess,
Whose flowers, now sparkling on SERENA's breast,
Give, tho' unseen those swelling orbs they bind,
Smiles to her face, and beauty to her mind :
For now, observant of the Sprite's behest, 45
The nymph conceals them by her upper vest :
Safe lies the spell, no mortal may descry,
Not keen PENELOPE's all-piercing eye ;
Who constant, as the steps of morn advance,
Surveys the household with a searching glance, 50
And entering now, with all her usual care,
Reviews the chamber of the youthful fair.
Beneath the pillow, not completely hid,
The novel lay—She saw—she seiz'd—she chid :
With rage and glee her glaring eye-balls flash, 55
Ah wicked age ! she cries, ah filthy trash !
From the first page my just abhorrence springs ;
For modern anecdotes are monstrous things :
Yet will I see what dangerous poisons lurk,
To taint thy youth, in this licentious work. 60

She

32 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

She said : and rudely from the chamber rush'd,
 Her pallid cheek with expectation flush'd,
 With ardent hope her eager spirit shook,
 Vain hope ! to banquet on a luscious book :
 So if a priest, of the Arabian sect, 65
 In Turkish hands forbidden wine detect,
 The sacred mussulman, with pious din,
 Arraigns the culprit, and proclaims the sin,
 Curses with holy zeal th' inflaming juice ;
 But cursing takes it for his secret use. 70

The gay SERENA, with unruffled mind,
 The pleasing novel, thus unread, resign'd.
 The vision on her soul such virtue left,
 She only smil'd at the provoking theft ;
 The teasing incident she deem'd a jest, 75
 Nor felt the zone grow tighter on her breast.

Now in full charms descends the finish'd fair,
 For now the morning banquet claims her care ;
 Already at the board, with viands pil'd,
 Her fire impatient sits, and chides his tardy child. 80
 On his imperial lips rude hunger reigns,
 And keener politics usurp his brains :

But

But when her love-inspiring voice he hears,
 When the soft magic of her smile appears,
 In that glad moment he at once forgets 85
 His empty stomach, and the nation's debts :
 He bends to Nature's more divine controul,
 And only feels the Father in his soul.
 Quick to his hand behold her now present
 The Indian liquor of celestial scent ! 90
 Not with more grace the nectar'd cup is given
 By rose-lipp'd Hebe to the lord of heaven.
 While her fair hands a fresh libation pour,
 Fashion's loud thunder wakes the sounding door.
 The light SERENA to the window springs, 95
 On curiosity's amusive wings :
 Her quick eyes sparkle with surprise, to see
 The glories of a golden vis-à-vis :
 Its glittering tablet gleam'd with mimic pearl,
 And the rich coronet announc'd an earl. 100
 The good old knight grew somewhat proud to hear
 Of this new visit from the early peer :
 SERENA recollects the vision's truth,
 And fluttering, hopes it is the promis'd youth :

34 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

PENELOPE from her high chamber peeps ; 105
 There her unfinish'd charms she coyly keeps ;
 With sage reserve her modesty abhorr'd
 To shew her morning face before a lord.

The peer alights : the well-rang'd vassals bawl
 His founding title thro' the spacious hall, 110
 Till in the deep saloon's extremest bound
 Th' ear-tickling words, "LORD FILLIGREE,"
 resound.

As when great Hector, setting war apart,
 Advanc'd to parley, with his spear athwart,
 The Greeks beheld him with a still delight ; 115
 And silent reverence stopt the rising fight ;
 With such respect, but unchastis'd by fear,
 SIR GILBERT and the nymph first meet the peer ;
 And, while his morning compliments commence,
 The flighted breakfast stands in cold suspense. 120
 But far unlike to Hector's ruder grace
 His modern stature, and his modish face !
 Nor less he differs from those barons old,
 Whose arms are blazon'd on his car of gold ;
 Whose prostrate castle guarded once the lands, 125
 Where, spruce in motley pride, his villa stands,

By

By Taste erected, in her trimmest mode,
Her mushroom structure, and her quaint abode.

As the neat daisy to the sun's broad flower,
As the French boudoir to the Gothic tower, 130
Such is the peer, whom fashion much admires,
Compar'd in person to his ancient fires :

For their broad shoulder, and their brawny calf,
Their coarse, loud language, and their coarser laugh,
His finer form, more elegantly slim, 135
Displays the fashionable length of limb :

With foreign shrugs his country he regards,
And her lean tongue with foreign words he lards ;
While Gallic Graces, who correct his style,
Forbid his mirth to pass beyond a smile. 140

As the nice workman in the wooden trade,
Hides his coarse ground, with finest woods o'erlaid,
Thus our young lord, with fashion's phrase refin'd;
Fineer'd the mean interior of his mind :
And hence, in courtesy's soft lustre seen, 145
His spirit shone, as graceful as his mien.
The artless fair, on fashion's kind report,
Thought him the mirror of a matchless court :

36 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Much she his dress, his language much observes,
 Whose finer accents prove his feeling nerves. 150
 Her fancy now the destin'd lover spies,
 But her free heart abjures the quick surmise ;
 Yet as he spoke, at every flattering word
 The vision's promise to her thought recurr'd.
 Far more parental pride contrives to blind 155
 The good SIR GILBERT's more-experienc'd mind,
 Who fondly saw, and at the prospect smil'd,
 A future countess in his favourite child.
 But what new flutterings shook SERENA's breast,
 What hopes and fears the modest nymph oppress'd, 160
 When with a simpering smile, and soft regard,
 The peer display'd a mirth-expressive card,
 Where the gay Graces, in a sportive band,
 Shew the sweet art of Cipriani's hand ;
 Where, in their train, his airy Cupids throng, 165
 And laughing drag a comic mask along !
 " We," cries my lord, with self-sufficient joy,
 Twirling, with lordly airs, the graceful toy,
 " We, who possess true science, we, who give
 The world a lesson in the art to live, 170

We

We for the fair a splendid fête design,
 And pay our homage thus at Beauty's shrine."
 He spoke ; and speaking, to the blushing maid,
 With modish ease, th' inviting card convey'd,
 Where Mirth announc'd her masque-devoted hour
 In characters intwin'd with many a flower : 176
 The blushing maid, with eyes of quick desire,
 View'd it, and felt her little soul on fire ;
 For of all scenes she had not yet survey'd,
 Her heart most panted for a masquerade : 180
 But her gay hopes increasing terrors drown,
 And dread forebodings of her father's frown.
 In mute suspense to read his thought she tries,
 And strongly pleads with her prevailing eyes,
 Her eyes, for doubt enchain'd her modest tongue, 185
 While on his sovereign word her pleasure hung.
 With such a tender, and persuasive air
 Of soft endearment, and of anxious care,
 Thetis attended from th' almighty fire
 His fateful answer to her fond desire : 190
 The good old knight, like the Olympian god,
 Blest the fair suppliant with his gracious nod ;

38 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Her lively spirit the kind signal took,
And her glad heart in every fibre shook.

The party settled, it imports not how, 195

The peer politely made his parting bow :

The nymph, with eyes that sparkled joyous fire,

Kiss'd the round cheek of her complying fire,

Then swiftly flew, and summon'd to her aid

Th' important counsel of her favourite maid, 200

To vent her joy, and, as the moments press,

To fix that first of points, a fancy-dress.

Quick as the poet's eyes o'er nature fly,

Piercing the deep, or traversing the sky,

With such light speed her fond ideas glance 205

O'er play and poem, story and romance,

While all the characters, she e'er has read,

Flash on her brain, and fill her busy head.

Now in Diana's form she hopes to meet

A fond Endymion fighting at her feet ; 210

Now her proud thought terrestrial pomp assumes,

And Dian's crescent yields to Indian plumes ;

Now, in the habit of the Grecian isles,

She hears some Osman suing for her smiles,

And

And sees his soul that blaze of dress outshine, 215

Whose wealth impoverish'd a diamond-mine ;

Now simpler charms her quick attention draw,

The rose-crown'd bonnet, and the hat of straw,

A village-maid she seems, in neat attire,

A faithful shepherd now her sole desire. 220

Thus, as new figures in her fancy throng,

“ She’s every thing by starts, and nothing long ;”

But, in the space of one revolving hour,

Flies thro’ all states of poverty and power,

All forms, on whom her veering mind can pitch, 225

Sultana, gipsy, goddess, nymph, and witch.

At length, her soul with Shakespeare’s magic fraught,

The wand of Ariel fixt her roving thought ;

Ariel’s light graces all her heart possess,

And Jenny’s order’d to prepare the dress. 230

It seems already bought, with fond applause ;

An azure tissue, and a silver gauze ;

Too soon, alas ! that garb of heavenly hue

The ready mercer flashes to her view.

Ah blind to fate ! how oft the youthful belle 235

Feels her gay heart at sight of tissue swell !

And thinks the fashionable filk must prove
 Her robe of triumph, and a spell to love !
 To thee, sweet maid, whose pleasure-darting eyes
 Joy in this favourite vest, an hour shall rise, 240
 When thou shalt hate the filk so fondly sought,
 And wish thy silver-spotted gauze unbought * :
 For busy Spleen thy trial now prepares ;
 Darkly she forms her unsuspected snares,
 And, keen to raise her pleasure-killing storm, 245
 Assumes PENELOPE's congenial form.
 In that prim shape, which all the graces shun,
 See the four fiend to good SIR GILBERT run !
 Where, deeply pondering the public debt,
 Silent he muses o'er a new gazette ! 250
 Ent'ring, she view'd, with eyes of envious spite,
 The card, that spoke the masque-devoted night :

* Nescia mens hominum fati fortisque futuræ,
 Et servare modum, rebus sublata secundis.

Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum
 Intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia ista diemque

oderit.

ÆNEID. x. v. 501. & seq.

Eager

Eager she darted on the graceful toy,
 And, fiercely pointing to each naked boy,
 “ Canst thou,” she cried, in a discordant scream, 255
 That rous’d the politician from his dream,
 While with her voice the echoing chamber rings,
 “ * Say ! canst thou suffer these flagitious things ?
 Are these devices to thy daughter brought,
 That wake such gross impurity of thought ? 260
 In vain are all the prudent words I preach,
 The modest maxims that I strive to teach ;
 By foolish fondness of your sense beguil’d,
 You still indulge, and spoil the flippant child :
 For me, whate’er I say is deem’d absurd ; 265
 She scorns my sage advice :—but mark my word,
 If to this ball you let the hoyden run,
 Your power is ended, and the girl undone.”

The patriot knight, by interruption vex’d,
 In his political pursuits perplex’d, 270
 While he with wrath th’ intruding Mischief eyed,
 Stern to the false PENELOPE replied :

* Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἢ νεμεσιζῇ, οὐκ ἔτι καρτέρα σπυα, &c.

42 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

“ Go ! teasing prude, cease in my ears to vent
 Thy envious pride, and peevish discontent !
 To me of prudence canst thou vainly boast ? 275
 Of all my household, thou hast plagu’d me most :
 The joys thou blamest are thy dear delight,
 By day the visit, and the ball by night :
 And, tho’ too old a lover to trepan,
 Thy midnight dream, thy morning thought, is man.
 Wert thou less closely to my blood allied, 281
 Thou should’st, to cure thee of thy canting pride,
 Be sent to sigh alone o’er purling brooks,
 Scold village maids, and croak to croaking rooks.”

He spoke indignant : the fly fiend withdrew, 285
 Nor inly griev’d ; for well her force she knew.
 As Indian females, in a jealous hour,
 Of secret poison try the subtlest power,
 Which sure, tho’ slow, corrodes th’ unconscious prey,
 And ends its triumph on a distant day : 290
 Thus the departing Fury left behind
 Her venom, latent in SIR GILBERT’S mind.
 The hidden mischief tho’ no eye observes,
 He feels it fretting on his alter’d nerves ;

But

But the kind habit of his healthy soul 295
 Still struggled hard against its base controul.
 Now Spleen's dark vapours, in his bosom hid,
 Prompt him the promis'd pleasure to forbid ;
 Now Love's soft pleadings that dire thought destroy,
 And save the blossom of his daughter's joy ; 300
 Her envious aunt now serves him for a jest,
 And gay good-humour reassumes his breast.

While Spleen's dark power now sinks, and now
 revives,

At length the day, th' important day, arrives,
 Which in his breast must end the close debate, 305
 And fix the colour of SERENA's fate.

Now comes the hour, when the convivial knight
 Waits to begin the dinner's chearful rite ;
 His fond heart ever, with a father's pride,
 Joys to behold his darling at his side ; 310
 But most the absence of her smile he feels
 In the gay season of his social meals :
 Hence, while for her the rich repast attends,
 His hasty summons to the nymph he sends :

The happy nymph superior cares induce 315

To risk his anger by a rash excuse :

She craves his pardon ; but, for time distressed,

She still is busy on her magic vest ;

To range her diamonds in a sparkling zone,

She begs to snatch her scanty meal alone. 320

The knight in fullen state begins to dine :

Spleen, like a harpy, flutters o'er his wine :

Invisible she poisons every dish,

Tinging with gall his mutton, fowl, and fish.

The more he eats, the more perverse he grows ; 325

For as his hunger sunk, his choler rose.

The cloth remov'd, he cries, with vapours sick,

The pears are mellow, and the port is thick ;

Tho' nicer fruit Pomona never knew,

And his rich wine surpass'd the ruby's hue ! 330

A thousand times his dizzy brain revolves

A stern command : now doubts, and now resolves

To bid the nymph descend, and, disarray'd,

Quit her dear project of the masquerade :

As oft kind nature to his heart recurr'd, 335

And love parental stopt the cruel word.

Mean

Mean time, unconscious of the brooding storm,
 The nymph exults in her improving form :
 Gay is her smile, as those the queen of love
 Darts on the Graces in her court above, 340
 While they contrive, with love-inspiring cares,
 New modes of beauty for the robe she wears.
 At length, each duty of the toilet past,
 The glance of triumph on the mirror cast,
 Now the light wand our finish'd Ariel arms ; 345
 Glad Jenny glories in her lady's charms ;
 And gives full utterance, as she smooths her vest,
 To the sweet bodings of SERENA's breast.

O ! lovely bias of the female soul !
 Which trembling points to pleasure's distant pole ; 350
 Which with fond trust on flattering hope relies,
 O'erleaps each peril, that in prospect lies,
 And springing to the goal, anticipates the prize !
 Such was SERENA's fear-discarding state ;
 Her eye beheld not the dark frowns of fate : 355
 She only saw, the combat all forgot,
 The triumph promis'd as her glorious lot.

Now,

46 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Now, eager to display her light attire,
 The sprightly damsel seeks her fullen fire ;
 His gloomy brow with sportive air she kist : 360
 Ah ! how could Spleen that magic lip resist ?
 That voice, whose melting music might assuage
 The scorpion Anger's self-tormenting rage ?
 For ne'er did nature to a fire's embrace
 Present a fillal form of softer grace ; 365
 Or fancy view a shape of lovelier kind
 In the bright mirror of her Shakespeare's mind.

The sulky fiend, in spite of all her art,
 Had now been banish'd from the father's heart,
 But that, resolv'd her utmost force to try, 370
 She summon'd to her aid her old ally,
 The fiery demon, temper-troubling Gout,
 Who sinks the lively, and appals the stout ;
 Who now, assisting Spleen's malignant aim,
 Shoots in quick throbbings through SIR GIL-
 BERT's frame. 375

Thus forely pester'd by a double foe,
 Galling his giddy brain, and burning toe,

The testy knight, with stern and fullen air,
 Denounc'd his humour to the shudd'ring fair :
 " Go change your drefs ! give up this vain delight !
 I will not hear of masquerades to-night ; 381
 Your chaperone's inform'd she need not wait,
 So change your drefs ! and sit with me sedate."

As the proud dame, whose avaricious glee
 Built golden castles in the rich South Sea, 385
 Gaz'd on her broker, when he told her first
 Her wealth was vanish'd, and the bubble burst :
 So gaz'd the nymph, hearing her fire destroy
 Her airy palace of ideal joy.
 First her fond thoughts to flattering doubt incline,
 And deem the harsh command no fix'd design, 391
 But the quick fall of a peevish word,
 That love revokes, the moment it is heard :
 Or haply mirth, in mimic wrath express'd,
 A feign'd forbiddance utter'd but in jest : 395
 To this short hope her sinking spirit clung,
 To see his softening eyes refute his tongue.
 Ah fruitless hope ! for there she cannot find
 The well-known signals of the friendly mind.

48 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Stern contradiction, with the frown of fate, 400
 On his dark visage reign'd in fullen state ;
 Felt in each feature, in each accent shown,
 Lower'd in his look, and thunder'd in his tone.
 Hence the warm bosom of the lively fair
 Now shivers with the chill of blank despair : 405
 Now disappointment's thick'ning shadows roll
 A cloud of horror o'er the darken'd soul ;
 And fancy, in a sick delirium tost,
 Gives double value to each pleasure lost.
 The blasted joys, she labours to forget, 410
 Rush on her mind, and waken keen regret :
 Her cheek turns pale—the tear prepares to start,
 And palpitation heaves her swelling heart.
 But here, SOPHROSYNE ! thy guardian aid
 Saves from her potent foe the sinking maid. 415
 Her bosom, into strong emotions thrown,
 Now feels the pressure of thy friendly zone.
 Swift thy kind cautions to her soul recur,
 More quick to cancel faults, than prone to err.
 As the rough swell of the insurgent tides 420
 By the mild impulse of the moon subsides :

So

So, by her mystic monitor repress,
 The flood of passion leaves her lighten'd breast,
 From her clear brain each cloudy vapour flies,
 And joy's bright ray rekindles in her eyes. 425

Reviving gaiety full lustre spread
 O'er all her features, and with smiles she said :
 " Let others drive to pleasure's distant home !
 Be mine the dearer joy to please at home !"
 Scarce had she spoke, when she with sportive ease
 Prest her piano-forte's fav'rite keys, 431
 O'er softest notes her rapid fingers ran,
 Sweet prelude to the Air she thus began !

SOPHROSYNE ! thou guard unseen !
 Whose delicate controul 435
 Can turn the discord of chagrin
 To harmony of soul !
 Above the lyre, the lute above,
 Be mine thy melting tone,
 Which makes the peace of all we love 440
 The basis of our own !

50 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

So sung the nymph, not uninspir'd : the sprite
 Invok'd so fondly in the mystic rite,
 With richest music swell'd her warbling throat,
 And gave new sweetness to her sweetest note. 445
 As when the seraph Uriel first begun
 His carol to the new-created sun,
 The sacred echo shook the vast profound,
 And chaos perish'd at the potent sound :
 So, at the magic of SERENA's strain, 450
 Spleen vanish'd from her fire's chaotic brain ;
 Whose fibres, lighten'd of that load, rejoice
 In the dear accents of her dulcet voice.
 Much he inclines his mandate to recall,
 And send the fair-one to the promis'd ball ; 455
 But stubborn pride forbids him to revoke
 The solemn sentence, which ill-humour spoke.
 Still, conscious of her power, the nymph prolongs
 The soft enchantment of her soothing songs ;
 Which his fond mind in firm attention keep, 460
 To his fixt hour of supper and of sleep :
 This now arriv'd, the knight, retiring, shed
 A double blessing on his darling's head ;

And

And with unusual exultation prest
His lovely child to his parental breast. 465

Thus while to rest the happy fire withdrew,
The nymph, more happy, to her chamber flew ;
And, Jenny now dismiss'd, the grateful fair
Breathes to her guardian Sprite this tender prayer :
"Thou kind preserver ! whose attentive zeal 470
Gives me in this contended hour to feel
That dearest pleasure of a soul refin'd,
The triumph of the self-corrected mind ;
If, happy in the strength thy smiles impart,
I own thy favour in no thankless heart, 475
Still let me view thy form, so justly dear !
Still in kind visions to these eyes appear !
Thy friendly dictates teach me to fulfil !
And let thy aid avert each future ill !"

While fond devotion taught her thus to speak,
The soft down sinks beneath her lovely cheek, 481
And settling on her lips, that sweetly close,
Silence, enamour'd, lulls her to repose.

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

C A N T O III.

YE kind transporters of th' excursive soul !
 Ye visions ! that, when night enwraps the pole,
 The lively wanderer to new worlds convey,
 Escaping from her heavy house of clay,
 How could the gentle spirit, foe to strife, 5
 Bear without you this coil of waking life ?
 Its grief-embitter'd cares, its joyless mirth,
 And all the flat realities of earth ?
 Sweet phantoms ! you the glowing hope inspire,
 You give to beauty charms, to fancy fire, 10
 When, soaring like the eagle's kindred frame,
 The poet dreams of everlasting fame ;
 Or, tickled by the feather of the dove,
 The softer virgin dreams of endless love.
 There was a time, when fortune's bright decrees 15
 Were seen to realize such dreams as these :

Now

Now dangerous visions the fond mind decoy
Vainly to pant for unexisting joy,
While belles and bards with mournful sighs exclaim,
Mortality has seiz'd both Love and Fame. 20

Ah fair SERENA, might the boast be ours
To clear from such a charge these heavenly powers !
Blest ! might thy bard deserve in Fame to see
A guard as faithful, as Love proves to thee !
Blest ! if that airy being gild his life, 25
Who sav'd thee trembling on the brink of strife,
And now, kind prompter of thy nightly dream,
Fill'd thy rapt spirit with her sacred beam !
For soon as slumber set thy soul at large,
Thy Guardian Power revisited her charge ; 30
And, lightly hovering o'er th' illumin'd bed,
Thus with fond smiles of approbation said :
" Well hast thou past, sweet maid, one trying
scene,

One fiery ordeal of the tyrant Spleen :
Thus, my SERENA, may thy force sustain 35
Each harder trial, that may yet remain !
Against the fiend to fortify thy soul,
By useful knowledge of her dark controul,

54 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

I come to show thee, what no mortal eye,
Save thine, was e'er permitted to descry; 40

The realms, where Spleen's infernal agents goad
The ghostly tenants of her drear abode.

Now summon all thy strength ! throw fear aside,
And firmly trust in thy æthereal guide !"

She spoke : and thro' the night's surrounding shade

Th' obedient nymph, not unappall'd, convey'd ; 46

Thro' long, long tracts of darkness, on they past
With speed, that struck the trembling maid aghast,

Till now, recovering by degrees, she found

Her soft foot press upon the solid ground. 50

Encourag'd by her guide, at length she tries

To search the gloomy scene, with anxious eyes.

* " Thro' me ye pass to Spleen's terrific dome,
Thro' me, to Discontent's eternal home :

* Per me si va nella citta dolente,

Per me si va nell' eterno dolore,

Per me si va tra la perduta gente,

* * * * *

Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' intrate,

Queste parole di colore oscuro

Vid' io scritte al sommo d'una porta.

DANTE, Inferno. 3.

Thro'

THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER. 55

Thro' me, to those, who sadden'd human life, 55

By fullen humour or vexatious strife ;

And here, thro' scenes of endless vapours hurl'd,

Are punish'd in the forms they plagued the world ;

Justly they feel no joy, who none bestow,

All ye who enter, every hope forego !" 60

O'er an arch'd cavern, rough with horrid stone,

On which a feeble light, by flashes, shone,

These characters, that chill'd her soul with dread,

SERENA, fixt in silent wonder, read.

As she began to speak, her voice was drown'd 65

By the shrill echo of far other sound :

Forth from the portal lamentable cries

Of wailing infants, without number, rise.

Compassion to this poor and piteous flock

Led the soft maid still nearer to the rock. 70

The pining band within she now espied,

And, touch'd with tender indignation, cried,

" How could these little forms, of life so brief,

Deserve this dire abode of lasting grief ?"

" —Weil may thy gentle heart be sore concern'd 75

At sight so moving," the mild Sprite return'd :

“Thou seest in those, whose wailings wound thy
ears,

The puny progeny of modern peers :

Their fires, by avarice or ambition led,

Aliens to love, approach'd the nuptial bed ; 80

With proud indifference, and with cold distaste,

Their homely brides reluctantly embrac'd,

And by such union gave disastrous birth

To these poor pale incumbrances of earth,

Who, bred in vanity, with pride their dower, 85

Were Spleen's sure victims from their natal hour,

And in their splendid cradles pul'd and pin'd,

Till Fate their ill-spun thread of life untwin'd,

And to this vestibule convey'd their ghosts,

To form the van-guard of th' infernal hosts. 90

But let not pity's ineffectual charm

Impede thy progress, or thy strength disarm !

Follow and fear not ! guarded by my care

From all the phantoms that around thee glare.”

She spoke ; and enter'd, ere the nymph replied, 95

A pass, that open'd in the cavern's side,

Low, dark, and rocky—with her body bent,

SERENA follow'd down the dire descent.

A sudden

A sudden light soon struck her dazzled view;
 But 'twas a light of such infernal hue, 100
 As double horror to the darkness gave,
 With dread reflection from a dusky wave.
 Round a black water tatter'd spectres stand,
 With each a tiny taper in its hand;
 Fierce mendicants! who strive some alms to win 105
 From the fair wanderer, with incessant din.
 The guardian Spirit saw SERENA grieve,
 To hear of wants she knew not to relieve;
 And to the generous nymph in pity cries:
 " The gulf of Indolence before us lies, 110
 O'er whose dull flood, to which no bank is seen,
 A boat must waft thee to the dome of Spleen.
 These pallid figures, that around thee press,
 And haunt thee with importunate distress,
 On earth were beggars of each different class, 115
 Tho' blended here in one promiscuous mass.
 The poor, who spurn'd kind industry's controul,
 The rich, who begg'd from penury of soul:
 Both by their abject pride alike debas'd,
 Blasphem'd that nature, which they both disgrac'd,
 And,

And, hither by the fullen fiend convey'd, 121
 Here still they ply their ineffectual trade ;
 In chafe of each new passenger they run,
 Condemn'd to beg from all, to gain by none.
 But from these wretches turn thy fruitless care ! 125
 Behold the gulf before thee, and beware !
 Nor touch the stream, which mortal sense o'ercomes,
 And by its baleful charm the soul benumbs !"
 " —Can mortal pass !" the shudd'ring nymph re-
 plied,

" This fullen, slow, unnavigable tide, 130
 In whose black current this enormous mound
 Of shapeless stone appears, this horrid bound,
 That seems an everlasting guard to keep
 O'er the dull waters, that beneath it creep ?"

While yet she spoke, with a resounding shock, 135
 Forth from the arch of the impending rock,
 Which o'er the murmuring eddy hung so low,
 The lazy river scarce had room to flow,
 Of rude construction, and in roughest plight,
 A boat now issued to SERENA's sight ; 140
 An empty boat, that slowly to the shore
 Advanc'd, without the aid of sail or oar ;

Self-mov'd

Self-mov'd it seem'd, but soon the nymph beheld
A grisly figure, who the stern impell'd.

Wading behind, the horrid form appear'd ; 145 }
Above the water his strong arm he rear'd,
And cross the creeping flood the crazy vessel steer'd. }

The heavenly Sprite observ'd her trembling ward,
Whose growing fears the hideous pass abhorr'd,
And cheering thus she spake : " This spectre boasts
The chief dominion of these dreary coasts : 151

To him, thy pilot, without dread consign,
And place thy body in his bark supine !

So thro' this arching rock thou'lt pass alone,
Safe from the perils of the incumbent stone : 155
Embark undaunted !—on the farther side

Thou'lt surely find me, thy unfailing guide.

Nor let this pilot raise thy groundless dread,

This sullen Charon of the froward dead,
A phantom, never blest with human life, 160

Tho' oft on earth his noxious power is rise ;

And in that region, ne'er from error free,

The words he dictates are assign'd to me.

60 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Observe this fiend, that Nature scorn'd to frame,
 Offspring of Pride, and Apathy his name ! 165
 Passions he ne'er can feel, and ne'er impart,
 A miscreated imp, without a heart ;
 In place of which, his subtle parent pinn'd
 A bladder, fill'd with circulating wind,
 Which seems with mimic life the mass to warm, 170
 And gives false vigour to his bloated form.
 But place thee in the boat his arms direct,
 My love shall watch thee, and my power protect."

So spake the friendly Sprite ; th' obedient maid
 Her form along the narrow vessel laid : 175
 But oh ! what terrors shake her tender soul,
 As from the shore the bark begins to roll,
 And, sever'd from her friend, her eyes discern
 The steering spectre wading at the stern !
 Far stronger fears her resolution melt, 180
 Than those, which erst the bard of Florence felt,
 When, by the honour'd shade of Virgil led
 Thro' all the dreary circles of the dead,
 Hell's fiercest demons threaten'd to divide
 The living poet from his shadowy guide ; 185

And

And bade him, friendless, and alone, return,
Thro' the dire horrors of the dark sojourn.
Not long the lovely fair-one's terrors last ;
For safely thro' th' impending rock she past :
And slow advancing to the gloomy strand, 190
The fullen pilot brings her safe to land.

There, fondly hovering on her guardian plumes,
The heavenly Monitor her charge resumes ;
And smiling, leads along the rocky road,
Whose windings open into Spleen's abode. 195

Thou queen of shades ! whose spirit-damping spell
Too oft is seen the poet's pride to quell,
May I, unpunish'd by thy subtle power,
Dare to display thy subterranean bower,
And to this wond'ring upper world explain 200
The shadowy horrors of thy secret reign ?

Entering beneath a wide fantastic arch,
Round the drear circuit of the dome they march ;
Which a pale flash from many a fiery sprite
Frequent illumines with intermitting light ; 205
Such, as on earth, to Superstition's eye,
Denounces ruin from the northern sky,

While

While she discerns, amid the nightly glare,
Armies embattled in the blazing air.

Around the nymph unnumber'd phantoms glide ;
Here swell the bloated race of bulky Pride : 211

In close and horrid union, there appear
The wilder progeny of frantic Fear ;
Mis-shapen monsters ! whose stupendous frame
Abhorrent Nature has refus'd to name. 215

Here, in cameleon colours, lightly flit
The motley offspring of disorder'd Wit.
All things prodigious the wide cave contain'd,
And forms, beyond what fable ever feign'd :
But, as the worm, that on the dewy green 220

Springs half to view, and half remains unseen,
Perceiving near its cell a human tread,
Slinks back to earth, and hides its timid head :
So, where the heavenly Spirit deign'd to lead,
The startled spectres from her step recede ; 225
And, as abash'd they from her eye retire,
Sink into mist, or melt in fluid fire.

High on an ebon throne, superbly wrought
With each fierce figure of fantastic thought,

In a deep cove, where no bright beam intrudes, 230
 O'er her black schemes the fullen empress broods.
 The screechowl's mingled with the raven's plume
 Shed o'er her furrow'd brows an awful gloom ;
 A garb, that glares with stripes of lurid flame,
 Wraps in terrific pomp her haggard frame ; 235
 Round her a serpent, as her zone, is roll'd,
 Which, writhing, stings itself in every fold.

Near her pavilion, in barbaric state,
 Four mutes the mandates of their queen await.
 From sickly Fancy bred, by fullen Sloth, 240
 Both parents' curse, yet pamper'd still by both,
 First stands Disease ; an hag of magic power,
 Varying her frightful visage every hour,
 Her horrors heightening, as those changes last,
 And each new form more hideous than the past. 245
 Detraction next, a shapeless fiend, appears,
 Whose shrivell'd hand a misty mirror rears ;
 Fram'd by malignant Art, th' infernal toy
 Inverts the lovely mien of smiling Joy,
 Robs roseate Beauty of attractive grace, 250
 And gives a stepdame's frown to Nature's face.

The

The third in place, but with a fiercer air,
 See the true Gorgon Disappointment glare !
 By whose petrific power Delight's o'erthrown ;
 And Hope's warm heart becomes an icy stone. 255
 Last, in a gorgeous robe, that, ill bestow'd,
 Bows her mean body by its cumbrous load,
 Stands fretful Discontent, of fiends the worst,
 By dignity debas'd, by blessings curst,
 Who poisons Pleasure with the fourest leaven, 260
 And makes a hell of Love's ecstatic heaven.

The guide celestial, near this ghastly group,
 Perceiv'd her tender charge with terror droop :
 " Fear not, sweet maid," she cries, " my steps
 pursue !

Nor gaze too long on this infernal crew ! 265
 Turn from Detraction's fascinating glass !
 In silence cross the throne ! observe, and pass !
 Beyond this dome, the palace of the queen,
 Her empire winds thro' many a dreary scene,
 Where she torments, as their deserts require, 270
 Her various victims, that on earth expire ;
 Each class apart : for in a different cell
 The fierce, the fretful, and the sullen dwell :

These

These shalt thou slightly view, in vapours hurl'd,
And swiftly then regain thy native world. 275

But first remark, within that ample nich,
With every quaint device of splendor rich,
Yon phantom, who, from vulgar eyes withdrawn,
Appears to stretch in one eternal yawn :

Of empire here he holds the tottering helm, 280

Prime minister in Spleen's discordant realm,
The pillar of her spreading state, and more,
Her darling offspring, whom on earth she bore ;

For, as on earth his wayward mother stray'd,
Grandeur, with eyes of fire, her form survey'd, 285

And with strong passion starting from his throne,
Unloos'd the fullen queen's reluctant zone.

From his embrace, conceiv'd in moody joy,
Rose the round image of a bloated boy :

His nurse was Indolence ; his tutor Pomp, 290

Who kept the child from every childish romp ;

They rear'd their nursling to the bulk you see,

And his proud parents call'd their imp ENNUÏ.

This realm he rules, and in superb attire

Visits each earthly palace of his fire : 295

66 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

A thousand shapes he wears, now pert, now prim,
 Pursues each grave conceit, or idle whim ;
 In arms, in arts, in government engages,
 With monarchs, poets, politicians, sages ;
 But drops each work, the moment it's begun, 300
 And, trying all things, can accomplish none :
 Yet o'er each rank, and age, and sex, his sway
 Spreads undiscern'd, and makes the world his prey.
 The light coquet, amid flirtation, sighs,
 To find him lurk in Pleasure's vain disguise ; 305
 And the grave nun discovers, in her cell,
 That holy water but augments his spell.
 As the strange monster, of the serpent breed,
 That haunts, as travellers tell, the marshy mead,
 Devours each nobler beast, tho' firmly grown 310
 To size and strength superior to his own ;—
 For on the grazing horse, or larger bull,
 Subtly he springs, of dark saliva full,
 With swiftly-darting tongue his prey anoints
 With venom, potent to dissolve its joints, 315
 And, while its bulk in liquid poison swims,
 Swallows its melting bone and fluid limbs :—

So

So this Ennui, this wonder-working elf,
 Can vanquish powers far mightier than himself :
 Nor Wit nor Science soar his reach above, 320
 And oft he seizes on successful Love.

Of all the radiant host who lend their aid
 To light mankind thro' life's bewildering shade,
 Bright Charity alone, with cloudless ray,
 May boast exemption from his baleful sway : 325
 Haste then, sweet nymph, nor let us longer roam
 Round the drear circle of this dangerous dome !
 Left e'en thy guide, entangled in his spell,
 Should fail to guard thee from a fiend so fell !"

So speaking, the kind Spirit's anxious care 330
 Led from the palace the attentive fair,
 And, winding through a passage dark and rude,
 Thus the mild monitor her speech renew'd :
 " 'Gainst fear and pity now thy bosom steel,
 For sights more horrible I now reveal ! 335
 Spleen's tortur'd victims view with dauntless eyes ;
 For lo ! her penal realms before thee rise !"
 The nymph advancing saw, with mute amaze,
 A dismal, deep, enormous dungeon blaze.

68 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Stones of red fire the hideous wall compos'd ; 340
 And massive gates the horrid confine clos'd,
 Th' infernal portrefs of this doleful dome,
 With fiery lips, that swell'd with poisonous foam,
 Pale Discord, rag'd ; with whose tormenting tongue,
 Thro' all its caves th' extensive region rung : 345
 A living vulture was the fury's crest ;
 And in her hand a rattlesnake she prest,
 Whose angry joints incessantly were heard
 To sound defiance to the screaming bird.

“ The boundless depth of this dire prison holds
 The untam'd spirits of imperious scolds : 351
 Nor think that females only fill the cave !
 Male termagants have liv'd, and here they rave.
 All of each sex are pent within this pale,
 Who knew no use of language, but to rail.” 355
 Thus to her charge exclaim'd the heavenly guide,
 And, as she spoke, the portals open'd wide,
 And to th' observance of the shuddering maid,
 Th' immeasurable den was all display'd.
 But oh ! what various noises from within 360
 Fill the vext air with one stupendous din !

Mourning's

Mourning's deep groan, and anger's furious call
 Terror's loud cry, and affectation's squall,
 The sob of passion, the hysteric scream,
 And shrieks of frenzy, in its fierce extreme ! 365
 In this wild uproar every sound's combin'd,
 That stuns the senses, and distracts the mind.
 " Mark" (to the nymph SOPHROSYNE began)
 " The fierce Xantippe flaming in the van,
 The vase, she emptied on the sage's head, 370
 Hangs o'er her own; a different shower to shed ;
 For, drop by drop, distilling liquid fire,
 It fills the vixen with new tropes of ire.

Beyond the Grecian dame extend your view,
 And mark the spectre of a modern shrew ! 375
 She, who whene'er she din'd, with furious look,
 Spurn'd her nice food, and bellow'd at her cook,
 Here justly feels a culinary rack,
 Bound like Ixion, to a whirling jack."
 SERENA gaz'd, but soon she turn'd away, 380
 Mute with disgust, and shuddering with dismay,
 " To scenes less hideous let us now repair !"

(Said the kind guard of the dejected fair)

And, cheering her faint charge, her step she led
To the near dwelling of the fretful dead. 385

Of dusky adamant the dungeon rose ;
A dingy mirror its dark sides compose,
Reflecting, with a thousand quaint grimaces,
The pale inhabitants' distorted faces.

" Here, like a dame of quality array'd, 390
Sits Peevishness, presiding o'er the shade,
And frowning at her own uncomely mien,
Whose coarse reflection on the wall is seen.

A snarling lap-dog her right hand restrains,
Her lap an infant porcupine contains, 395

Which, while her fondness tries its wrath to still,
Wounds her each moment with a pointed quill,

The froward spirits here in durance fret,
Whose testy life was one continued pet ;

Here they in trifles that vexation find, 400

Which teaz'd on earth their irritated mind.

Observe the phantom, who with eyes askance
Still to the mirror turns her eager glance !

See ! to her cheek, incessant as she turns,

Her vex'd blood rushes, and her visage burns. 405

Beauty

Beauty for lasting bliss had form'd the maid ;
 Love to her charms his faithful homage paid ;
 But, all this swelling tide of joy to check,
 A fatal freckle rises on her neck :
 Her soft cosmetics the griev'd nymph applies, 410
 Success attends her, and the freckle dies :
 But ah ! this victory avails her not ;
 She finds an hydra in the teasing spot :
 Fast as one flies, another still succeeds,
 And with eternal food her fretful humour feeds. 415

Near to the nymph, in a more moody fit,
 See the pale phantom of a peevish wit !
 Mark with what frowns his eager eyes peruse,
 Wet from the press, three Critical Reviews ;
 With wounded vanity's distracting rage 420
 How rapidly he runs thro' every page !
 He finds some honours lavish'd on his verse,
 And joy's faint gleams his gloomy spirit pierce,
 But oh ! too soon these feeble sparks decay :
 And keen vexation reassumes her prey. 425
 Hating reproof, in every fibre sore,
 One censur'd particle torments him more,

More than a hundred happier lines delight,
Which liberal favour condescends to cite.

But time will fail us, if we pause to view 430

The various torments of the testy crew ;
These wretched chymists, whose o'erheated brain
Extracts from nothing a substantial pain.

Yet, ere to different districts we advance,
Take of one fretful tribe a transient glance ! 435

Their unsuspected punishments supply
A lesson, useful to the female eye.

Spleen's liveliest agent here beguiles the gay,
Fair to attract, and flattering to betray."

As thus the kind æthereal guardian spoke, 440

Within a rock, whence plaintive murmurs broke,
She touch'd a secret spring, whose power was such,
Two jarring doors unfolded at the touch,

And, with the charms of regal splendor bright,
A chearful banquet sparkles to the sight. 445

Viands so light, so elegantly grac'd,
Might tempt e'en Temperance herself to taste ;
For fruits alone compos'd th' enticing treat,
Fair to the eye, and to the palate sweet.

In such bright juice the peach and cherry swim, 450
As make the topaz and the ruby dim.

Here crown'd with every flower, and gaily drest
In all the glitter of a Gallic vest,
Whose ample folds her loathsome body screen'd,
A child of luxury reigns, a subtle fiend ! 455

Who, with a grace that every heart allures,
Smiles on the lustre of her rich *liqueurs*.
Her fatal smiles their utmost power exert
To poison beauty at her dire dessert ;
To blast the rose that health's bright cheek adorns,
And fill each festive heart with latent thorns : 461

For the sly fiend, of every art possesst,
Steals on th' affection of her female guest ;
And, by her soft address seducing each,
Eager she plies them with a brandy peach : 465
They with keen lip the luscious fruit devour ;
But swiftly feel its peace-destroying power.

Quick thro' each vein new tides of frenzy roll :
All evil passions kindle in the soul,
Drive from each feature every chearful grace, 470
And glare ferocious in the fallow face ;

The

74 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

The wounded nerves in furious conflict tear,
 Then sink, in blank dejection and despair.
 Effects more dire, thus tempting to deceive,
 The apple wrought not in the soul of Eve; 475
 Howe'er disguis'd, in jelly or in jam,
 Spleen has no poison surer than a dram.

“ But haste we now” (the heavenly leader cries)
 “ To where this penal world’s last wonder lies !”
 She spoke ; and led the nymph thro’ deeper dells, 480
 Low-murmuring vaults, and horror-breathing cells.
 And now they pass a perforated cage,
 Where rancorous spectres without number rage,
 “ Avert thine eye !” (the heavenly Spirit said)
 “ Nor view these abject tribes of envious dead ! 485
 Who pin’d to hear the voice of truth proclaim
 A sister’s beauty, or a brother’s fame !
 Tho’ crown’d with all prosperity imparts,
 High in their various ranks, and several arts ;
 Yet, meanly sunk by envy’s base controul, 490
 They died in that consumption of the soul ;
 And here, thro’ bars that twisted adders make,
 And the long volumes of th’ envenom’d snake,

O’er

O'er this dark road they dart an anxious eye,
 Still envying every fiend that flutters by. 495
 Pass ! and regard them not !"—Th' attentive maid
 In silent tremor the behest obey'd.

This dungeon 'cross'd, her weary feet she drags
 Thro' winding caverns, and o'er icy crags :
 Soul-chilling damps in the dark passage reign, 500
 Which issues on a vast and dreary plain,
 Fann'd by no breezes, with no verdure crown'd ;
 The black horizon is its only bound.
 And now advancing, in a drizzly mist,
 Thro' fullen phantoms, hating to exist, 505
 SERENA spies, high o'er his subjects plac'd,
 The ghastly tyrant of the gloomy waste.
 Murmuring he sits upon a rocking stone,
 Th' unstable base of his ill-founded throne :
 Hideous his face, and horrible his frame, 510
 Misanthropy the grisly monster's name !
 Him to fierce Pride, with raging passion fore,
 The frowning gorgon, Disappointment, bore ;
 On earth detested, and by heaven abhorr'd,
 Of this drear wild he reigns the moody lord. 515

76 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Few are the subjects of his waste domain,
 And scarce a female in his frightful train,
 Except one changing corps of ancient prudes :
 Reluctant here the prying band intrudes.
 Each, who on earth, behind her artful fan, 520
 Feign'd coarse aversion to the creature man,
 Is doom'd, in this dark region, to abide
 Some transient pains for hypocritic pride.
 Here ever-during chains those scoffers bind,
 Whose writings deaden and debase the mind ; 525
 Who mock creation with injurious scorn,
 And feel a fancied void in plenty's horn.

In his right-hand, an emblem of his cares,
 A branch of aconite the monarch bears ;
 And those four phantoms, who this region haunt,
 He feeds with berries from this deadly plant ; 531
 For, strange to tell ! tho' sever'd from its root,
 The bough still blackens with successive fruit.
 The tribes, who taste it, burst into a fit
 Of raving mockery and rancorous wit ; 535
 And, pleas'd their tyrant's ghastly smile to court,
 By vile distortions make him various sport.

The

The frantic rabble, who his sway confess,
 Before his throne an hideous puppet dress ;
 When in unseemly rags they have array'd 540
 The **image**, from their own dark semblance made,
 In horrid gambols round their work they throng,
 With antic dance and rude discordant song ;
 Satire's rank offals on the block they fling,
 And call it nature, to delight their king : 545
 While in their features he exults to see
 The frowns of torture, mixt with grins of glee.
 For, as these abject toils engage the crew,
 Their own grim idol darkens to their view ;
 Wide and more wide its horrid stature spreads, 550
 And o'er the tribe new consternation sheds :
 For each forgets, in his bewilder'd gaze,
 'Tis but a monster, which he help'd to raise.
 As o'er its form their dizzy glances roll,
 It strikes a cheerless damp thro' all the soul. 555
 Vainly to shun the baleful sight they try,
 It draws for ever the reluctant eye :
 At each review with deeper dread they start ;
 A colder chaos numbs each freezing heart.

78 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

No mutual confidence, no friendly care, 560
 Relieves the panic they are doom'd to bear ;
 For as they shrink absorb'd in wild affright,
 When each to each inclines his wounded fight.
 They feel, for social comfort, sour disgust,
 And all the fullen anguish of distrust. 565

Around these wretches in the drear abode,
 The ghastly grinning fiend Derision rode,
 Who to their wayward minds on earth supplied
 Perverted ridicule's malignant tide.
 His steed of Pegasus the semblance bore ; 570
 But with false wings, that knew not how to soar
 Where'er he pass'd, with mischief in his look,
 A founding whip of knotted snakes he shook ;
 And laugh'd in lashing each pretended sage,
 Whose malice wore the mask of moral rage. 575
 An uncouth bugle his left-hand display'd,
 From a grey monkey's skull by Cunning made,
 And form'd to pour, in harmony's despite,
 Sounds that each jarring sense of pain excite :
 And now his livid lips this bugle blew ; 580
 Thro' every den the piercing discord flew :

The

The fiends all answer'd in one hideous yell,
And in a fearful trance SERENA fell.
Hence from the lovely nymph her senses fled,
Till, thro' the parted curtains of her bed, 585
The amorous fun, who now began to rise,
Kist, with a sportive beam, her opening eyes.

END OF THE THIRD CANTO.

CANTO

C A N T O IV.

HA I L, thou enlighten'd globe of human joy !
 Where social cares the soften'd heart employ :
 What cheering rays of vital comfort roll
 In thy bright regions o'er the rescued soul,
 Which, 'scaping from the dark domain of Spleen, 5
 Springs with new warmth to thy attractive scene !
 Once more I bless thy pleasure-breathing gale,
 And gaze enchanted on thy flowery vale,
 Where smiling innocence, and ardent youth,
 Sport hand in hand with beauty and with truth. 10
 Sport on, sweet revellers ! in rosy bowers,
 Safe from th' intrusion of all evil powers !
 Ah fruitless wish of the benignant Muse,
 Which to this chequer'd world the Fates refuse !
 For round its precincts many an ugly sprite 15
 Speeds undiscern'd to poison pure delight :

Amidst

Amidst the foremost of this haggard band,
 Unwearied poster of the sea and land,
 Wrapt in dark mists, malignant Scandal flies,
 While Envy's poison'd breath the buoyant gale sup-
 plies. 20

Tho' SHERIDAN, with shafts of comic wit,
 Pierc'd, and expos'd her to the laughing pit,
 Th' immortal hag still wears her paper crown,
 The dreaded empress of the idle town :
 O'erleaping her prerogative of old, 25
 To sink the noble, to defame the bold ;—
 In chase of worth to slip the dogs of strife,
 Thro' all the ample range of public life ;—
 The tyrant now, that sanctuary burst
 Where happiness by privacy is nurs'd, 30
 Her fury rising as her powers increase,
 O'erturns the altars of domestic peace.
 Pleas'd in her dark and gall-distilling cloud
 The sportive form of innocence to shroud,
 Beauty's young train her baleful eyes survey, 35
 To mark the fairest, as her favourite prey.

82 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Hence, sweet SERENA, while thy spirit stray'd
 Round the deep realms of subterranean shade,
 This keenest agent of th' infernal powers
 On earth was busied, in those tranquil hours, 40
 To blast thy peace, and poison'd darts to aim
 Against the honour of thy spotless name :
 For Scandal, restless fiend, who never knows
 The balmy blessing of an hour's repose,
 Worn, yet unfated with her daily toil, 45
 In her base work consumes the midnight oil.
 O'er fiercer fiends when heavy slumbers creep,
 When wearied avarice and ambition sleep,
 Scandal is vigilant, and keen to spread
 The plagues that spring from her prolific head. 50
 On truth's fair basis she her falsehood builds,
 With tinsel sentiment its surface gilds ;
 To nightly labour from their dark abodes
 The demons of the groaning press she goads,
 And smiles to see their rapid art supply 55
 Ten thousand wings to every infant lie.

In triumph now behold the hag applaud
 Her keen and fav'rite imp, ingenious Fraud,

Her

Her quick compositor, whose flying hand
 Has clos'd the paragraph she keenly plann'd. 60
 No nymph she nam'd, yet mark'd her vile intent,
 That dulness could not miss the name she meant:
 In satire's tints the injur'd fair she drew,
 In form an angel, but in soul a Jew.

It chanc'd her fire among his friends inroll'd 65
 A wealthy senator, infirm and old ;
 Who, dup'd too early by a generous heart,
 Rashly assum'd a misanthropic part :
 Tho' peevish fancies would his mind incrust,
 Good-nature's image lurk'd beneath their rust ; 70
 And gay SERENA, with that sportive wit
 Which heals the folly that it deigns to hit,
 Would oft the sickness of his soul beguile,
 And teach the sullen humorist to smile ;
 Pleas'd by her virtuous frolics to assuage 75
 The mental anguish of distemper'd age.
 This ancient friend, in a sarcastic sketch,
 Was mark'd by Scandal as a monied wretch,
 For whom the young, yet mercenary fair
 Had subtly spread a matrimonial snare. 80

84 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

With such base matter, more diffusely wrought,
 The spirit-piercing paragraph was fraught,
 O'er which with glee the eye of Scandal glar'd,
 Which for the opening press herself prepar'd ;
 She on the types her inky wad let fall, 85
 And smear'd each letter with her bitterest gall ;
 The press, whose ready gripe the charge receives,
 Stamps it successive on ten thousand leaves,
 Which pil'd in heaps impatient seem to lie,
 They only wait the dawn of day to fly. 90

Now, as the child, in lonely chamber laid,
 Mute in the dark, and of itself afraid,
 When, haply conscious of the pain it feels,
 The watchful mother to its pillow steals,
 Springs to her breast, and shakes off all alarms, 95
 Feeling its safety in her fostering arms :
 With such quick joy, in innocence as young,
 The soft SERENA from her pillow sprung,
 Pleas'd to awake from her terrific dream,
 And feel the chearful's sun's returning beam. 100
 Eager she rose, in busy thought, nor staid
 The wonted summons of her punctual maid,

And

And as her own fair hands adjust her vest,
 The guardian cincture flutters on her breast;
 For fondly, when she wak'd, or when she slept, 105
 Still round her heart th' important zone she kept.
 Thou happy girdle ! to thy charge be just !
 Firm be thy threads, and faithful to their trust;
 For hours approach, when all the stores they hide
 Of magic virtue, must be strongly tried !— 110
 Now, while her kind domestic heart intends
 To please her early fire, the nymph descends ;
 But sleep, who left the fair with sudden flight,
 With late wings hover'd o'er the good old knight ;
 And the chill circle of the lone saloon 115
 Informs the shiv'ring maid she rose too soon.
 'Tis true, attentive John's unfailing care
 Began the rites of breakfast to prepare ;
 But yet no fires on the cold altar burn,
 No smoke arises from the silver urn, 120
 And the blank tea-board, where no viands lay,
 Only supplied the paper of the day.
 Tho' mild SERENA's peace-devoted mind
 The keen debate of politics declin'd,

And heard with cold contempt, or generous hate, 125
 The frauds of party and the lies of state ;
 Nor car'd much more for fashion's loose intrigues,
 Than factious bickerings or foreign leagues ;
 Yet, while she saunters idle and alone,
 Her careless eyes are on the paper thrown. 130

As some gay youth, whom sportive friends engage
 To view the furious ourang in his cage,
 If while amus'd he sees the monster grin,
 And trusts too careless to the bolts within,
 If the sly beast, as near the grate he draws, 135
 Tear him unguarded with projected paws,
 Starts at the wound, and feels his bosom thrill
 With pain and wonder at the sudden ill :
 So did SERENA start, so wildly gaze,
 In such mixt pangs of anguish and amaze, 140
 Feeling the wound which Scandal had design'd
 To lacerate her mild and modest mind.
 Startled, as one who from electric wire
 Unheeding catches unsuspected fire,
 She reads, then almost doubts that she has read, 145
 And thinks some vision hovers round her head.

Now,

Now, her fixt eye some striking words confine,
 And now she darts it thrice thro' every line ;
 Nor could amazement more her senses shake,
 Had every letter been a gorgon's snake. 150

Now rising indignation takes its turn,
 And her flush'd cheeks with tingling blushes burn,
 With restless motion and with many a frown,
 Thro' the wide room she paces up and down :
 Now, musing, makes a momentary stand, 155
 The fatal paper fluttering in her hand.

So the shy bird, by cruel sportsmen sprung,
 And by their random fire severely stung,
 Scar'd, not disabled, by the distant wound,
 Now trembling flies, now skims along the ground, 160
 Now vainly tries, in some sequester'd spot,
 From her gor'd breast to shake the galling shot.

Ye tender nymphs ! whose kindling souls would
 flame,

Touch'd, like SERENA's, by injurious blame,
 O let your quick and kindred spirits form 165
 A vivid picture of the mental storm

In which she labour'd, and whose force to paint
The Muse's strongest tints appear too faint ;

In sympathetic thought her suffering see !

But O, for ever from such wrongs be free ! 170

Her faithful girdle try'd its power to save,
And oft a monitory impulse gave ;

Still unregarded, still unfelt, it prest

With useless energy her heaving breast,

Her mind, forgetful of the magic zone, 175

Full of the burning shaft by Scandal thrown,

With blended notes of sorrow and disdain,

Thus in disorder'd language vents its pain :—

“ Had malice dar'd my honour to defame,

The self-refuted lie had lost its aim : 180

But here the world, deceiv'd by slanderous art,

Must think SERENA has a venal heart.”

A venal heart ! at that detested sound,

In swelling anguish her sunk voice was drown'd.

Now was a fearful crisis of her fate : 185

Distended now by passion's growing weight,

And for its mistress fill'd with conscious dread,

The magic girdle crack'd thro' every thread,

And

And snapp'd perchance by Scandal's force accurst,
 From her full heart the guardian zone had burst, 190
 And, spite of all the virtues of the fair,
 The spell of happiness had sunk in air,
 But that SOPHROSUNE, whose friendly fear
 Timely foresaw this trial too severe,
 An early succour gain'd from secret love, 195
 From the fell kite to snatch the falling dove,

As Nature studies, in her wide domain,
 To blend some antidote with every bane ;
 Thus her kind aid the friendly power contriv'd, 199
 That, from the quarter whence the wound arriv'd,
 There flow'd, the anguish of that wound to calm,
 A soothing, soft, and medicinal balm.

As in her agitated hand the fair
 Wav'd the loose paper with disorder'd air,
 In capitals she saw SERENA flame : 205
 She blush'd, she shudder'd, as she view'd the name ;
 Her ready fears subside in new surprise,
 And eager thus she reads with lighten'd eyes :

“ Go,

“ Go, faithful sonnet, to SERENA say 209

What charms peculiar in her features reign :

A stranger, whom her glance may ne’er survey,

Pays her this tribute in no flattering strain.

Tell her, the bard, in beauty’s wide domain,

Has seen a virgin cheek as richly glow,

A bosom, where the blue meandering vein 215

Sheds as soft lustre thro’ the lucid snow,

Eyes, that as brightly flash with joy and youth,

And locks, that like her own luxuriant flow :

Then say, for then she cannot doubt thy truth,

That the wide earth no female form can show

Where nature’s legend so distinctly tells, 221

In this fair shrine a fairer spirit dwells.”

With curious wonder the reviving maid

View’d this fond homage to her beauty paid ;

A second glance o’er every line she cast, 225

And half pronounc’d and half suppress’d the last,

While modest pleasure, and ingenuous pride,

Her burning cheek with deeper crimson dy’d.

*

O Praise !

O Praise ! thy language was by heaven design'd
 As manna to the faint bewilder'd mind : 230
 Beauty and diffidence, whose hearts rejoice
 In the kind comfort of thy cheering voice,
 In this wild wood of life, wert thou not nigh,
 Must, like the wandering babes, lie down and die :
 But thy sweet accents wake new vital powers, 235
 And make this thorny path a path of flowers :
 As oil on ocean's troubled waters spread,
 Smooths the rough billow to a level bed,
 The soothing rhyme thus soften'd into rest
 The painful tumult of SERENA's breast. 240

Now, to herself restor'd, the conscious maid
 The lurking fiend's insidious snare survey'd ;
 Her nerves, with grateful trepidation, own
 A slighter pressure from the faithful zone ;
 And in fond thought she breathes a thankful prayer
 For her ætherial guardian's constant care ; 246
 Yet with a keen desire her bosom glow'd,
 To hear from whom the gentle sonnet flow'd ;
 But kind SOPHROSYNÆ, who watch'd unseen,
 To shield her votary from the wiles of Spleen, 250
 As

As friendly love had fixt a future time,
 When to reveal the secret of the rhyme,
 Strove till that hour her fancy to restrain,
 Nor let her anxious wishes rise to pain.

As gaiety's fresh tide began to roll, 255
 Fast in the swelling channel of her soul,
 The good old knight descends, tho' eager, slow,
 The gout still tingling in his tender toe ;
 And now, paternal salutations past,
 His eyes he keenly on the paper cast, 260
 While his sweet daughter, with attentive grace,
 Before him flies his ready cup to place ;
 For tea and politics alternate share,
 In friendly rivalry, his morning care.
 Tho' smooth as oil the knight's good-humour flows,
 When the mild breeze of pleasant fortune blows, 266
 Yet, quick to catch the casual sparks of ire,
 Like oil it kindles into mounting fire ;
 And fiercely now his flaming spirit blaz'd,
 While on those galling words he wildly gaz'd, 270
 Whose force had almost work'd into a storm
 The gentler elements in beauty's form.

As

As the sarcastic sentence caught his view,
 Back from the board his elbow-chair he drew,
 And, by sharp stings of sudden fury prick'd, 275
 Far from his foot his gouty stool he kick'd.

Fierce as Achilles, by Atrides stung,
 He pour'd the stream of vengeance from his tongue ;
 But ah, those angry threats he deign'd to speak,
 Had sounds, alas ! far differing from the Greek. 280
 Rage from his lips in legal language broke ;
 Of juries and of damages he spoke,
 And on the printer's law-devoted head
 He threaten'd deep revenge in terms most dread ;
 Terms, that with pain the ear of beauty pierce, 285
 And oaths too rough to harmonize in verse.

While thus the good old knight, with passion hot,
 His toast neglected, and his tea forgot,
 The discord of the drama to increase,
 Now prim PENELOPE assails her niece ; 290
 For, as SIR GILBERT now, with choler dumb,
 Points her the period with his angry thumb,
 " Ah ! brother," cries the stiff, malignant crone,
 (Her sharp eye swiftly thro' the sentence thrown)

" Scandal

“Scandal could never rise to heights like this, 295
 But from the manners of each modern miss ;
 Had but my niece, less giddy and more grave,
 Observ’d the prudent hints I often gave——”

The honest knight her vile conclusion saw,
 And quick curtail’d it with a testy “Pshaw !” 300
 Mean while the gentle maid, who heard the taunt,
 Survey’d without a frown her prudish aunt :
 Far other thoughts employ’d her softer mind,
 To one sweet purpose all her soul inclin’d ;
 How she might close th’ unpleasant scene, how best
 Restore good humour to her father’s breast. 306
 Her airy guardian with delight survey’d
 These tender wishes in the lovely maid,
 And, to accomplish what her heart desir’d,
 Trains of new thought above her age inspir’d. 310

As Venus on her son’s enlighten’d face
 Shed richer charms, and more attractive grace,
 When, issuing forth from the dissolving cloud,
 His bright form burst on the admiring crowd :
 So kind SOPHROSYNE, unseen, supplies 315
 A livelier radiance to SERENA’s eyes ;

And

And, ere she speaks, to captivate her fire,
Touches her lips with patriotic fire.

It chanc'd, that, tofs'd upon a vacant chair,
A volume of that wit lay near the fair, 320

Whose value, try'd by fashion's varying touch,
Once rose too high, and now is sunk too much ;

The book, which fortune plac'd within her reach,
Contain'd, O CHESTERFIELD, the liberal speech

In which thy spirit, like an Attic sage, 325

Strove to defend the violated stage

From fetters basely forg'd by ministerial rage.

From this the nymph her useful lesson took,

And thus began, reclining on the book :—

“ If on this noble lord we may rely, 330

Scandal is but a speck on Freedom's eye ;

And public spirit, then, will rather bear

The casual pain it gives by growing there,

Than, by a rash attempt to move it thence,

Hazard the safety of a precious sense, 335

And, by the efforts of a vain desire,

Rob this life-darting eye of all its fire.

Tho.

Tho' the soft breast of innocence may smart,
 By cruel calumny's corroding dart,
 Yet would she rather ache in every nerve, 340
 And bear those pangs she knows not to deserve,
 Much rather than be made a senseless tool,
 To aid the frenzy of tyrannic rule,
 Or forge one dangerous bolt for power to aim
 At sacred Liberty's superior frame."—— 345

As ancient chiefs were wont of old to gaze,
 With eyes of tender awe and fond amaze
 On the fair priestess of the Delphic fane,
 When first she utter'd her prophetic strain, 349
 Entranc'd in wonder, thus SIR GILBERT view'd
 His child, yet more inspir'd, who thus pursu'd :
 " For me, I own, these lines, with gall replete,
 Shot thro' my simple heart a sudden heat ;
 But happier thoughts my rising rage repress,
 And turn'd the pointless insult to a jest : 355
 And O ! should Slander still new wrath awake,
 Still may my father, for his daughter's sake,
 Disdain the vengeance of litigious strife,
 And let SERENA's answer be—her life !"

She ended with a smile, whose magic flame 360
 Shot youthful vigour thro' her father's frame :
 His age, his anger, and his gout, are fled ;
 " Enchanting girl !" with tears of joy, he said,
 " Enchanting girl !" twice echoed from his tongue,
 As, speaking, from his elbow-chair he sprung, 365
 " Come to thy father's arms !—By Heaven, thou art
 His own true offspring, and a Whig in heart."

He spoke ; and his fond arms around her curl'd
 With proud grasp, seeming to infold the world.
 Her conscious heart she feels with triumph beat, 370
 And joys to find that triumph is compleat ;
 For stiff PENELOPE, who near them stood,
 " Albeit unused to the melting mood,"
 Squeez'd from her eye-lid one reluctant tear,
 And soften'd with a smile her brow severe ; 375
 But 'twas a smile of such a gloomy grace,
 As lighten'd once upon Alecto's face,
 When Orpheus past her, leading back to life,
 From Pluto's regions, his recover'd wife,
 When love connubial, join'd to music's spell, 380
 Moist'n'd with tender joy the eyes of hell.

I bleſs thy ſuccour in each trial paſt ;
Be preſent ſtill, and ſave me in the laſt !”

Thus, with her lovely eyes devoutly fixt,
Where rays of hope, and fear, and reverence mixt,
The tender fair her faithful guard addreſt, 406
Then with her cheek her downy pillow preſt ;
But long her wakeful lids reſuſe to cloſe,
For curioſity diſpels repoſe.

Her buſy mind the myſtic veil would pierce, 410
That hides the author of the pleaſing verſe ;
Her lips involuntary catch the chime,
And half articulate the ſoothing rhyme,
Till weary thought no longer watch can keep,
But ſinks reluctant in the folds of ſleep. 415

END OF THE FOURTH CANTO.

C A N T O V.

WH Y art thou fled, O blest poetic time,
 When Fancy wrought the miracles of rhyme;
 When, darting from her star-encircled throne,
 Her poet's eye commanded worlds unknown;
 When, by her fiat made a mimic god, 5
 He saw existence waiting on his nod,
 And at his pleasure into being brought
 New shadowy hosts, the vassals of his thought,
 In joy's gay garb, in terror's dread array,
 Darker than night, and brighter than the day; 10
 Who, at his bidding, thro' the wilds of air,
 Rais'd willing mortals far from earthly care,
 And led them wondering thro' his wide domain,
 Beyond the bounds of nature's narrow reign;
 While their rapt spirits, in the various flight, 15
 Shook with successive thrills of new delight?

Return,

Return, sweet season, grac'd with fiction's flowers,
 Let not cold system cramp thy genial powers !
 Shall mild Morality, in garb uncouth,
 The housewife garb of plain and homely truth, 20
 Robb'd by stern Method of her rosy crown,
 Chill her faint votaries by a wintry frown ?
 No ; thou sweet friend of man, as suits thee best,
 Shine forth in Fable's rich-embroider'd vest !
 O make my verse thy vehicle, thy arms, 25
 To spread o'er social life thy potent charms !
 And thou, SOPHROSYNE, mysterious sprite !
 If haply I may trace thy steps aright,
 Roving thro' paths untrod by mortal feet,
 To paint for human eyes thy heavenly feat, 30
 Shed on my soul some portion of that power,
 Which sav'd SERENA in the trying hour,
 To bear those trials, which, however hard,
 As bards all tell us, may befall the bard ;
 The fop's pert jest, the critic's frown severe, 35
 Learning's proud cant, with envy's artful sneer,
 And, the vex'd poet's last and worst disgrace,
 His cold blank bookseller's rhyme-freezing face.

Hence ! ye dark omens, that to Spleen belong,
 Ye shall not check the current of my song, 40
 While Beauty's lovely race, for whom I sing,
 Fire my warm hand to strike the ready string.

As quiet now her lightest mantle laid
 O'er the still senses of the sleeping maid,
 Her nightly visitant, her faithful guide, 45
 Descends in all her empyrean pride ;
 That fairy shape no more she deigns to wear,
 Whose light foot smoothes the furrow plough'd by care
 In mortal faces, while her tiny spear
 Gives a kind tingle to the caution'd ear. 50
 Now, in her nobler shape, of heavenly size,
 She strikes her votary's soul with new surprise.
 Jove's favourite daughter, arm'd in all his powers,
 Appear'd less brilliant to th' attending Hours,
 When, on the golden car of Juno rais'd, 55
 In heavenly pomp the queen of battles blaz'd :
 With all her lustre, but without the dread
 Which from her arm the frowning gorgon shed,
 SOPHROSYLE descends, with guardian love,
 To waft her gentle ward to worlds above. 60

From

From her fair brow a radiant diadem
 Rose in twelve stars, and every separate gem
 Shot magic rays, of virtue to controul
 Some passion hostile to the human soul.
 Round her sweet form a robe of æther flow'd, 65
 And in a wonderous car the smiling Spirit rode ;
 Firm as pure ivory, it charm'd the sight
 With finer polish and a softer white.
 The hand of beauty, with an easy swell,
 Scoop'd the free concave like a bending shell ; 70
 And on its rich exterior, art display'd
 The triumphs of the Power the car convey'd.
 Here, in celestial tints, surpassing life,
 Sate lovely Gentleness, disarming Strife ;
 There, young Affection, born of tender Thought, 75
 In rosy chains the fiercer passions caught ;
 Ambition, with his sceptre snapt in twain,
 And Avarice, scorning what his chests contain.
 Round the tame vulture flies the fearless dove ;
 Soft Innocence embraces playful Love ; 80
 And laughing Sport, the frolic child of Air,
 Buries in flowers the sinking form of Care.

These figures, pencil'd with a touch so light,
 That every image seem'd an heavenly sprite,
 Breathe on the car ; whose sight-enchancing frame 85
 Four wheels sustain, of pale and purple flame ;
 For no fleet animals, to earth unknown,
 Bear thro' ætherial fields this flying throne.
 As by the subtle electrician's skill,
 Globes seem to fly, obedient to his will ; 90
 So these four circles of instinctive fire
 Move by the impulse of their queen's desire.
 Mount or descend by her directing care,
 Or rest, supported by the buoyant air.

Now, springing from her car, that hovering staid
 High in the chamber of the sleeping maid, 96
 The goddess, with a voice divinely clear,
 Breath'd these kind accents in her votary's ear :—
 “ Come, my fair champion, who so well hast fought
 The useful battles of contentious thought ; 100
 To aid thy gentle spirit to sustain
 The final conflict of thy destin'd pain,
 View the rewards that, in my realms of bliss,
 Wait the sweet victor in such war as this !

So haply may thy mind, with strength renew'd, 105
 The dark devices of the fiend elude ;
 By one blest effort seal thy triumphs past,
 And gain thy promis'd guerdon in the last."

As thus she spake, her heavenly arms embrac'd,
 And in the car the conscious maiden plac'd. 110
 Quick at her wish the flaming wheels ascend,
 No clouds impede them, wheresoe'er they bend.
 As thro' the empire of the winds they rush'd,
 The winds were all in mute submission hush'd :
 And now SERENA, from th' exalted car, 115
 Look'd down, astonish'd, on each sinking star ;
 Flying o'er lucid orbs, whose distant light
 Yet has not reach'd the scope of human sight ;
 And now, not distant from the bounds of space,
 The guardian sprite suspends their rapid race ; 120
 And, while in deep amaze the nymph admires
 The circling meteors' inoffensive fires,
 Pleas'd at her wonder, the mild Power address'd,
 With kind intelligence, her earthly guest :—
 " Of those three orbs, that in yon crystal sphere 125
 A separate system in themselves appear,

The

The last, whose luminous and steady form
 Shines softly bright, and moderately warm,
 Contains my palace, and the gentle train
 Whom I have wasted to this pure domain. 130
 At equal distance my dominions lie
 From these two larger worlds, more near thine eye :
 Observe their difference as our wheels advance,
 And passing, take of each a transient glance."

So speaking, to the grosser globe she sprung, 135
 Her car suspended o'er its surface hung,
 In heavy air ; for round this orb was roll'd
 A circling vapour, dull, and damp, and cold.
 " Here," says SOPHROSYNE, " those beings dwell,
 Who wanted soul to act or ill or well ; 140
 Who saunter'd thoughtless thro' their mortal time,
 Without a care, a virtue, or a crime ;
 Here still they saunter, in this languid scene :
 But pass the dozing crowd, and mark their queen."
 And now, slow riding on a tortoise' back, 145
 Her features lifeless, and each fibre slack,
 Full in their view the nymph Indifference came ;
 The quick SERENA soon perceiv'd her name ;

For,

For, as in solemn creeping state she rode,
 In her lax hand she held fair GREVILLE'S ode. 150
 Ne'er did the muse from her sweet treasure cull
 Incense so precious for a Power so dull,
 Still as she mov'd along her even way,
 The heavy goddess try'd to read the lay ;
 But at each pause her inattentive eye 155
 Stray'd from the paper, which she held awry ;
 Nor could her lips a single line repeat,
 Tho' the soft verse, most ravishingly sweet,
 Thro' Time's just ear will lasting pleasure spread,
 And charm the poppy from Oblivion's head. 160
 Thus, like a city mayor, whose heavy barge
 Steers its dull progress at the public charge,
 This Power, so cumber'd by her empire's weight,
 Makes her slow circuit round her sluggish state.
 Around her, tribes of rambling sceptics crawl, 165
 Tho' moving, dubious if they move at all.
 Before her, languid Pomp, her marshal, creeps,
 Whose hand her banner half unfolded keeps :
 Its quaint device her dull dominion spoke—
 An eagle, numb'd by the torpedo's stroke. 170
 " Enough

“ Enough of scenes so foreign to thy soul,”

SOPHROSYNE exclaim'd ; “ from this dark goal
Pass we to regions opposite to this.”

She spoke ; and, darting o'er the wide abyss,
Her car, like lightning in soft flashes hurl'd, 175
Shot to the confines of a clearer world.

Now lovelier views the virgin's mind absorb ;

For now they hover'd o'er a lucid orb,

Here the soft air, luxuriantly warm,

Imparts new lustre to SERENA's form : 180

Her eyes with more expressive radiance speak,

And richer roses open on her cheek.

Here, as she gaz'd, she felt in every vein

A blended thrill of pleasure and of pain ;

Yet every object glittering in her view, 185

Her quick regard with soft attraction drew.

SOPHROSYNE, who saw the gentle fair

Lean o'er these confines with peculiar care,

Smil'd at the tender interest she display'd,

And spoke regardful of the pensive maid : 190

“ Well may'st thou bend o'er this congenial sphere ;

For Sensibility is sovereign here.

Thou

Thou seest her train of sprightly damsels sport,
 Where the soft spirit holds her rural court ;
 But fix thine eye attentive to the plain, 195
 And mark the varying wonders of her reign."

As thus she spoke, she pois'd her airy seat
 High o'er a plain exhaling every sweet ;
 For round its precincts all the flowers that bloom
 Fill'd the delicious air with rich perfume ; 200
 And in the midst a verdant throne appear'd,
 In simplest form by graceful fancy rear'd,
 And deck'd with flowers ; not such whose flaunting
 dyes

Strike with the strongest tint our dazzled eyes ;
 But those wild herbs that tenderest fibres bear, 205
 And shun th' approaches of a damper air.

Here stood the lovely ruler of the scene,
 And beauty, more than pomp, announc'd the queen.

The bending snow-drop, and the briar-rose,
 The simple circle of her crown compose ; 210

Roses of every hue her robe adorn,
 Except th' insipid rose without a thorn.

Thro' her thin vest her heighten'd beauties shine ;
 For earthly gauze was never half so fine.

Of that enchanting age her figure seems, 215
 When smiling nature with the vital beams
 Of vivid youth, and pleasure's purple flame,
 Gilds her accomplish'd work, the female frame,
 With rich luxuriance tender, sweetly wild,
 And just between the woman and the child. 220
 Her fair left arm around a vase she flings,
 From which the tender plant mimosa springs :
 Towards its leaves, o'er which she fondly bends,
 The youthful fair her vacant hand extends
 With gentle motion, anxious to survey 225
 How far the feeling fibres own her sway :
 The leaves, as conscious of their queen's command,
 Successive fall at her approaching hand ;
 While her soft breast with pity seems to pant,
 And shrinks at every shrinking of the plant. 230

Around their sovereign, on the verdant ground,
 Sweet airy forms in mystic measures bound.
 The mighty master of the revel, Love,
 In notes more soothing than his mother's dove,
 Prompts the soft strain that melting virgins sing, 235
 Or sportive trips around the frolic ring,

Coupling,

Coupling, with radiant wreaths of lambent fire,
 Fair fluttering Hope and rapturous Desire.
 Unnumber'd damsels different charms display,
 Pensive with bliss, or in their pleasures gay ; 240
 And the wide prospect yields one touching sight
 Of tender, yet diversified delight.
 But, the bright triumphs of their joy to check,
 In the clear air there hangs a dusky speck ;
 It swells—it spreads—and rapid, as it grows, 245
 O'er the gay scene a chilling shadow throws.
 The soft SERENA, who beheld its flight,
 Suspects no evil from a cloud so light ;
 For harmless round her the thin vapours wreath,
 Not hiding from her view the scene beneath ; 250
 But ah ! too soon, with pity's tender pain,
 She saw its dire effect o'er all the plain :
 Sudden from thence the sounds of anguish flow,
 And joy's sweet carols end in shrieks of woe :
 The wither'd flowers are fall'n, that bloom'd so fair,
 And poison all the pestilential air. 256
 From the rent earth dark demons force their way,
 And make the sportive revellers their prey.

Here

Here gloomy Terror, with a shadowy rope,
 Seems, like a Turkish mute, to strangle Hope ; 260
 There jealous Fury drowns in blood the fire
 That sparkled in the eye of young Desire ;
 And lifeless Love lets merciless Despair
 From his crush'd frame his bleeding pinions tear.
 But pangs more cruel, more intensely keen, 265
 Wound and distract their sympathetic queen :
 With fruitless tears she o'er their misery bends ;
 From her sweet brow the thorny rose she rends,
 And, bow'd by grief's insufferable weight,
 Frantic she curses her immortal state : 270
 The soft SERENA, as this curse she hears,
 Feels her bright eye suffus'd with kindred tears ;
 And her kind breast, where quick compassion swell'd,
 Shar'd in each bitter suffering she beheld.

The guardian Power survey'd her lovely grief, 275
 And spoke in gentle terms of mild relief :
 " For this soft tribe thy heaviest fear dismiss,
 And know their pains are transient as their bliss :
 Rapture and agony, in nature's loom,
 Have form'd the changing tissue of their doom ; 280

Both

Both interwoven with so nice an art,
 No power can tear the twisted threads apart :
 Yet happier these, to Nature's heart more dear,
 Than the dull offspring in the torpid sphere,
 Where her warm wishes, and affections kind, 285
 Lose their bright current in the stagnant mind.
 Here grief and joy so suddenly unite,
 That anguish serves to sublimate delight."

She spoke ; and, ere SERENA could reply,
 The vapour vanish'd from the lucid sky ; 290
 The nymphs revive, the shadowy fiends are fled,
 The new-born flowers a richer fragrance shed ;
 The gentle ruler of the changeful land,
 Smiling, resum'd her symbol of command ;
 Replac'd the roses of her regal wreath, 295
 Still trembling at the thorns that lurk beneath :
 But, to her wounded subjects quick to pay
 The tender duties of imperial sway,
 Their wants she succour'd, they her wish obey'd,
 And all recover'd, by alternate aid ; 300

114 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

While, on the lovely queen's enchanting face,
 Departed sorrow's faint and fainter trace,
 Gave to each touching charm a more attractive
 grace.

Now, laughing Sport, from the enlighten'd plain,
 Clear'd with quick foot the vestiges of pain ; 305
 The gay scene grows more beautifully bright,
 Than when it first allur'd SERENA's sight,
 Still her fond eyes o'er all the prospect range,
 Flashing sweet pleasure at the blissful change :
 Her curious thoughts with fond attachment burn, 310
 Yet more of this engaging land to learn.

She finds the chief attendants of the queen,
 Sweet females, wafted from our human scene ;
 But, as it chanc'd, while all the realm reviv'd,
 A spirit masculine from earth arriv'd : 315
 Two airy guides conduct the gentle shade ;
 Genius, in robes of braided flames array'd,
 And a fantastic nymph, in manners nice,
 Profusely deck'd with many an odd device ;

Sister

Sister of him, whose luminous attire 320

Flashes with unextinguishable fire ;

Like him in features, in her look as wild,

And Singularity by mortals styl'd.

The eager queen, and all her smiling court,

Surround the welcome shade in gentle sport ; 325

For in their new associate all rejoice,

All pant to hear the accents of his voice.

Tho' o'er his frame th' Armenian robe was flung,

The pleasing stranger spoke the Gallic tongue ;

But in that language his enchanting art 330

Inspir'd new energy, that seiz'd the heart ;

In terms so eloquent, so sweetly bold,

A story of disastrous love he told,

Convuls'd with sympathy, the list'ning train,

At every pause, with dear delicious pain, 335

Intreat him to renew the fascinating strain.

And now SERENA, with suspended breath,

Listen'd, and caught the tale of Julia's death ;

And quick she cries, ere tears had time to flow,

" Blest be this hour ! for now I see Rousseau." 340

Fondly she gaz'd, till the enchanting sound
 In such a potent spell her spirit bound,
 That, lost in sweet illusion, she forgot
 The promis'd scenes of the sublimer spot ;
 Till now her mild remembrancer, whose care 345
 Stray'd not a moment from the mortal fair,
 Rous'd her rapt mind, preparing her to meet
 The brighter wonders of her blissful seat ;
 While her instinctive car's obedient frame
 Now upward rose, like undulating flame. 350

As when some victor on the watery world,
 Bright honour gilding all his sails unfurl'd,
 Steers into port, while to the laughing sky
 His streamers tell his triumph as they fly ;
 Expecting thousands line the crowded strand, 355
 Swell the glad voice, or wave the joyous hand,
 Pressing to view the sight their vows implor'd,
 And hail their glory and their strength restor'd :
 So the blest beings of this smiling scene
 Flock'd round the car of their returning queen. 360
 The radiant car, from which they now alight,
 Careful she gives to a selected sprite,

A nymph

A nymph of snowy vest and lovely frame,
 Fidelity her fair and spotless name ;
 'Then, happy to review her hallow'd home, 365
 Leads her sweet guest to her celestial dome.

Gentlest of powers ! for every purpose fit,
 To strengthen wisdom, and embellish wit ;—
 Thou, whose soft arts, possess'd by thee alone,
 Can give to virtue's voice a sweeter tone ; 370
 Allay the frost of age, or fire of youth,
 And lend attraction to severest truth ;
 Improve e'en beauty by thy graceful ease,
 Or teach deformity herself to please ;—
 Inspire the bard, whose just ambition pants 375
 'To guide weak mortals to thy heavenly haunts !
 Grant him, in notes that, like thy soft controul,
 Allure attention, and possess the soul ;
 Grant him to show, in luminous display,
 'The mystic wonders of thy secret sway ! 380

Now, at the sight of the presiding power,
 Wide spread the gates of a stupendous tower,
 On whose firm height, commanding nature's bound,
 The faithful warder of the fort they found,

Wakeful Intelligence, a trusty sprite, 385
 Whose eyes are piercing as the solar light,
 And ever on the watch to sound alarm,
 If aught of dusky hue, portending harm,
 Should, in defiance of her mandate, dare
 Approach the palace of th' imperial fair. 390
 Within his ward, magnificently great,
 Lies the rich armoury that guards her state.
 Here stands Conviction's strong and lucid spear,
 Whose touch annihilates suspense and fear ;
 Here, Truth's un sullied adamantinè shield, 395
 Which, save SOPHROSYNE, no power can wield ;
 And Reason's trenchant blade of blazing steel,
 Its edge and polish form'd by friendly zeal ;
 And, not less sure their destin'd mark to hit,
 Pointed by virtue's hand, the shafts of Wit ; 400
 And Ridicule's strong bolt, whose stunning blow
 Lays towering vice and fearless folly low.
 Here too the goddess kept, in mystic state,
 Those sweet rewards that on her champions wait,
 Guerdons more precious than triumphant palms :—
 The glance of gratitude for mental alms, 406

Peace's

Peace's soft kifs, and reconciliation's tear,
And smiles of sympathy, are treasur'd here.

These precincts past, now hand in hand they came
To the rich fabric of majestic frame ; 410

Instinct with joy their sovereign to behold,
The gates of massive adamant unfold ;

And, as the gently-moving valves uncloze,
Mysterious music from their motion flows ;

The airy notes thro' all the palace roam, 415
And dulcet echoes fill the festive dome :

A gorgeous hall amaz'd SERENA's eyes,

Compar'd to which, in splendor, strength, and size,
The noblest works of which tradition sings,

Judaic shrine, or seat of Memphian kings, 420
Would seem more humble than the waxen cell

In which the skilful bee is proud to dwell.

Here sits a power, in whose angelic face

Beauty is sweeten'd by maternal grace ;

Her radiant feat, surpassing mortal art, 425

Supports an emblem of her liberal heart,

A pelican, who rears her callow brood,

And from her vitals seems to draw their food.

Around this spirit flock a filial host,
 Who blefs her empire, and her guidance boast. 430

Here every science, all the arts attend,
 In her they hail their parent and their friend ;
 Each to her presence brings the happy few,
 Whose dearest glory from her favour grew.

Here, in her simple charms, with youthful fire, 435

Proud to display the magic of her lyre,
 Soul-soothing Harmony presents her band :

Beside her Orpheus and Amphion stand.
 Here, mild Philosophy, whose thoughtful frown

Is sweetly shaded by her olive crown, 440

(In all her Attic elegance array'd,
 Strong to convince, and gentle to persuade)

To her, whose breath inspir'd his every rule,
 Leads the blest fire of the Socratic school.

Each animating bard and moral sage, 445

The heaven-taught minds of every clime and age,
 Who soften'd manners, and refin'd the soul,

Flock to this presence, as to glory's goal ;
 And, as the mother's heart, that yearns to blefs

The rival innocents that round her press, 450

Delights

Delights to see them, as her love they share,
 Sport in her sight, and flourish by her care ;
 Fondly responsive to their every call,
 Tender of each, and provident for all :
 So this sweet image of celestial grace, 455
 Who sits encircled by her lovely race,
 To every science vital strength imparts,
 And rears the circle of the social arts ;
 With such solicitude she gives to each,
 Pow'rs of sublimer aim and wider reach. 460
 And now SOPHROSYNE, who near her prest,
 Thus spoke her title to her earthly guest :—
 “ Behold the honour'd form, without whose aid
 My strength must vanish, and my glory fade !
 Source of my being, and my life's support ! 465
 EUNOIA call'd in this celestial court,
 BENEVOLENCE the name she bears on earth,
 The guard of weakness, and the friend of worth.”

She ended : and the mild maternal form
 Embrac'd SERENA with a smile as warm 470
 As the gay spirit Vegetation wears,
 When she to crown her favourite nymph prepares,
 When,

When, pleas'd her flowery treasures to display,
She pours them in the lap of youthful May.

But how, SERENA! how may human speech 475
Thy heavenly raptures in this moment reach?

If aught of earthly sentiment may vie

With the pure joy these happy scenes supply,

'Tis when, unmixt with trouble and with pain,

Love glides in secret thro' the glowing vein; 480

When some fond youth, unconscious of its fire,

Free from chill fear and turbulent desire,

With every thought absorb'd in soft delight,

Sees all creation in his fair-one's sight,

And feels a blissful state without a name, 485

Repose of soul with harmony of frame.

So, plung'd in pleasure of the purest kind,

SERENA gaz'd on the maternal mind;

Gaz'd till SOPHROSYNE's directing aid

Thus summon'd to new sights th' obedient maid:—

“Haste, my fair charge, for of this ample state, 491

Tracts yet unseen thy visitation wait.

The pressing hours forbid me to unfold

Each separate province which these confines hold;

But

But I will lead thee to that blissful crew, 495
 Whose kindred spirits best deserve thy view."

So speaking, her attentive guest she led
 Thro' scenes, that still increasing wonder bred.
 Where'er she trod, thro' all her gorgeous feat,
 Soft music echoed from beneath her feet : 500
 Passing a portal, on whose lucid stone
 Emblems of innocence and beauty shone,
 They reach a lawn with verdant lustre bright,
 And view the bowers of permanent delight.
 No fiery sun here forms a scorching noon, 505
 No baleful meteor gleams, no chilling moon :
 But, from a latent source, one soothing light,
 Whose constant rays repel the mist of night,
 Tho' tender, chearful, and tho' warm, serene,
 Gives lasting beauty to the lovely scene. 510
 No sensual thought this paradise profanes ;
 For here tried excellence in triumph reigns,
 Benignant cares eternal joy supply,
 And bliss angelic beams in every eye.

" In yonder groups," the leading spirit cried, 515
 " My fav'rite females see, my fairest pride.

The

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The first in rank is that distinguish'd train,
 Whose strength of soul was tried by Hymen's chain :
 Tho' beauty blest their form, and love, their guide,
 Their nuptial band with happiest omens tied, 520
 Beauty and love, they felt, may lose the art
 To fix inconstant man's eccentric heart ;
 Yet, conscious of their lord's neglected vow,
 No virtue frown'd outrageous on their brow,
 To keep returning tenderness aloof, 525
 By coarse upbraiding, and despis'd reproof :
 With sorrow smother'd in attraction's smile,
 They strove the sense of misery to beguile ;
 And, from wild passion's perilous abyss,
 Lure the lost wanderer back to faithful bliss. 530
 See mild Octavia o'er this band preside,
 Voluptuous Antony's neglected bride,
 Whose feeling heart, with all a mother's care,
 Rear'd the young offspring of a rival fair.
 Far other trials rais'd yon lovely crew, 535
 Tho' in connubial scenes their merit grew :
 It was their chance, ere judgment was mature,
 When glittering toys the infant mind allure,

Following

Following their parents' avaricious rule,
 To wed, with hopes of bliss, a wealthy fool. 540
 When time remov'd delusion's veil by stealth,
 And shew'd the drear vacuity of wealth;
 When sad experience prov'd the bitter fate
 Of beauty coupled to a senseless mate,
 These gentle wives still gloried to submit; 545
 These, tho' invited by alluring wit,
 Refus'd in paths of lawless joy to range,
 Nor murmur'd at the lot they could not change:
 But, with a lively sweetness, unoppress'd
 By a dull husband's lamentable jest, 550
 Their constant rays of gay good-humour spread
 A guardian glory round their idiot's head.
 The next in order are those lovely forms,
 Whose patience weather'd all paternal storms;
 By filial cares, the mind's unfailing test, 555
 Well have they earn'd these seats of blissful rest:
 They, unrepining at severe restraint,
 Peevish commands, and undeserv'd complaint;
 Bent with unwearied kindness to appease
 Each fancied want of querulous disease; 560
 Gave

Gave up those joys which youthful hearts engage,
To watch the weakness of parental age.

Turn to this chearful band ; and mark in this,
Spirits who justly claim my realms of bliss !
Most lovely these ! when judg'd by generous truth, 565
Tho' beauty is not their's, nor blooming youth :
For these are they, who, in life's thorny shade,
Repin'd not at the name of ancient maid.
No proud disdain, no narrowness of heart,
Held them from Hymen's tempting rites apart ; 570
But fair discretion led them to withdraw
From the priz'd honour of his proffer'd law ;
To quit the object of no hasty choice,
In mild submission to a parent's voice ;
The valued lover with a sigh resign, 575
And sacrifice delight at duty's shrine.
With smiles they bore, from angry spleen exempt,
Injurious mockery, and coarse contempt :
'Twas their's to clasp, each selfish care above,
A sister's orphans with parental love, 580
And all her tender offices supply,
Tho' bound not by the strong maternal tie :

'Twas

'Twas their's to bid intestine quarrels-cess,
 And form the cement of domestic peace.
 No throbbing joy their spotless bosom fir'd, 585
 Save what benevolence herself inspir'd ;
 No praise they fought, except that praise refin'd,
 Which the heart whispers to the worthy mind.

Such are these gentle tribes, the happy few
 Who share the triumph to their victory due : 590
 Angelic aims their spotless minds employ,
 And fill their measure of unchequer'd joy.
 Behold ! where some with generous ardour wait
 Around yon seer, who holds the book of fate ;
 Those awful leaves with eager glance they turn, 595
 Thence with celestial zeal they fondly learn
 What dangers threaten, thro' the vale of earth,
 Their kindred pilgrims, ere they rise to birth :
 To earth they still invisibly descend,
 In that dark scene congenial minds defend, 600
 From pleasure's bud drive spleen's corroding worm,
 And in my votaries' heart my power confirm.
 Delights more calm yon listening band employ,
 Who deeply drink of intellectual joy.

See them around that speaking nymph rejoice, 605

Their pleasures varying with her varied voice !

What graces in the sweet enthusiast glow !

Repeating here whate'er she learns below.

Memory her name, her charge o'er earth to flit,

And cull the fairest flowers of human wit. 610

Whatever Genius, in his happiest hour,

Has penn'd, of moral grace and comic power,

To warm the heart, the spells of Spleen unbind,

And pour gay sunshine o'er the misty mind ;

Teach men to cherish their fraternal tie, 615

And view kind nature with a filial eye ;

This active spirit catches in her flight,

Skill'd to retain, and happy to recite.

Here she delivers each bright work, and each

Derives new beauty from her graceful speech. 620

Warpt by no envy, by no love misled,

Equal she holds the living and the dead ;

Alike rehearsing, as they claim their turn,

The song of Anstey, and the tale of Sterne.

But morning calls thee hence.—Yet one scene

more, 625

My fostering love shall lead thee to explore.

This,

This, thy last sight, with careful eyes survey,
And mark th' extensive nature of my sway."

Thus with fond zeal the guardian Spirit said,
And to new precincts of her palace led ; 630

The scene she enter'd of her richest state,
Where on her voice the subject passions wait :

Here rose a throne of living gems, so bright
No breath could fully their benignant light ;
This, her immortal seat, the gracious guide 635

Assum'd : her ward stood wondering at her side.
Swift as they felt their ruling Power inthron'd,
Ætherial beings, who her empire own'd,
Crowded in glittering pomp the gorgeous scene,
To pay their homage to their heavenly queen. 640

First came chaste Love, whose sweet harmonious
form

Ne'er felt suspicion's soul-convulsing storm ;
No baleful arrow in his quiver lies,
No blinding veil inwraps his sparkling eyes ;
There all the rays of varied joy unite, 645
And jointly shed unspeakable delight.

With him was Friendship, like a virgin drest,
The soft asbestos form'd her simple vest,

Whose wond'rous folds, in fiercest flames entire,
Mock the vain ravage of consuming fire : 650

Around this robe, a mystic chain she wore,
Each golden link a star of diamonds bore ;
Force could not tear the finish'd work apart,
Nor int'rest loose it by his subtlest art :

But, strange to tell, if the presiding Power, 655

Who to her favourite gave this precious dower,

If kind SOPHROSYNE could fail to breathe

Her vital virtue on this magic wreath,

The parts must sever, faithless to their trust,

The gold grow dross, and every diamond dust. 660

These Valour follow'd, deck'd with verdant palm,

Gracefully bold, majestically calm.

A mingled troop succeed, with festive sound,

Wisdom with olive, Wit with feathers crown'd ;

Here, hand in hand they move, no longer foes, 665

Their charms increasing as their union grows ;

Pure spirits all, who hating mental strife,

Exalt creation, and embellish life ;

All here attend, and, in their sovereign's praise,

Their circling forms the song of glory raise. 670

The

The blest SERENA drinks, with ravish'd ear,
 The melting music of the tuneful sphere.
 Now in its close the soothing echoes roll
 O'er her rapt fancy, and in trance her soul;
 Her senses sink in soft oblivion's bands, 675
 Till faithful Jenny at her pillow stands,
 Recalls each mental and corporeal power,
 While she proclaims aloud the passing hour;
 And, in a voice expressive of surprise,
 Too shrill to seem the music of the skies, 680
 Informs the startled fair 'tis time to rise.

END OF THE FIFTH CANTO.

C A N T O VI.

BLEST be the heart of sympathetic mould,
 Whatever form that gentle heart infold,
 Whose generous fibres with fond terror shake,
 When keen affliction threatens to o’ertake
 Young artless beauty, as alarm’d she strays 5
 Thro’ the strange windings of this mortal maze !
 To such, SERENA, be thy story known,
 Whose bosom best can make thy lot their own,
 And, kindly sharing in thy trials past,
 Attend with sweet anxiety the last. 10
 The hour approaches, the tremendous hour,
 In whose dark moments deeper perils lower ;
 Still so inwapt in pleasure’s gay disguise,
 They lurk invisible to caution’s eyes ;
 And, unsuspected by the fair one, wait 15
 To cancel or confirm her blissful fate.

Her lively mind with bright ideas stor’d,
 She takes her station at the breakfast-board ;

Still

Still her soft soul the heavenly vision fills,
 And sweeter graces in her smile instils ; 20
 New hopes of triumph glide thro' every nerve,
 And arm her glowing heart with firm reserve ;
 Conscious the final trying chance impends,
 To bear its force her every power she bends ;
 In her quick thought ambitious to presage 25
 How Spleen's dark agents may exert their rage,
 She ponders on what perils may befall,
 And fondly deems her mind a match for all.
 Ah, lovely nymph ! this dangerous pride forego ;
 Pride may betray—security's thy foe. 30

While fancied prudence thus, a foreign guest,
 Sits doubly cherish'd in SERENA's breast,
 Behold a billet her attention steal,
 No common arms compose its ample seal ;
 Th' unfolding paper breathes a roseate scent, 35
 Sweet harbinger of joy, its kind intent.
 Of courteous FILLIGREE it bears the name,
 Clear symptom of the peer's increasing flame !
 The gracious earl, lamenting pleasure lost,
 And fair SERENA in her wishes crost, 40

Has plann'd, in honour of the lovely maid,
 A fancied ball, a private masquerade,
 And supplicates her fire, with warm esteem,
 To smile indulgent on the festive scheme.
 All arts he uses to insure the grant, 45
 Nor leaves unask'd the eager maiden aunt.
 Quick at the sound SERENA's glowing heart
 Throbs with gay hopes ; but soon those hopes depart :
 Reflection, in her soul a faithful guard,
 The opening avenues of pleasure barr'd : 50
 She deem'd the plan of this delightful show,
 But the new ambush of her secret foe ;
 The bliss too bright to realize, she guess'd,
 And chas'd th' idea from her guarded breast.
 While these discreet resolves her thought employ, 55
 Tranquil she triumphs o'er her smother'd joy.
 Not so the knight—to his parental eyes,
 In dazzling pomp delusive visions rise :
 That coronet, the object of his vow,
 He sees suspended o'er his daughter's brow ; 60
 Eager he burns to snap the pendent thread,
 And fix the glory on his darling's head.

Far wiser aims the ancient maiden caught,
 No empty gew-gaw flutters in her thought ;
 But, while more keenly she applauds the plan, 65
 Her hope is solid and substantial man ;
 Not for her infant niece, whose baby frame
 She holds unfit for Hymen's holy flame ;
 But for her riper self, whose strength may bear
 The heaviest burden of connubial care. 70

Tho' different phantoms dance before their sight,
 Niece, aunt, and father, in one wish unite,
 To join the banquet is their common choice,
 The business past with no dissenting voice ;
 And the warm fire, in whom ambition burn'd, 75
 A note of grateful courtesy return'd :
 His billet seal'd, the glad good-humour'd knight
 Launch'd forth, like Nestor, on his youthful
 might :—

“ O could I now, in spite of age, retain
 That active vigour, and that sprightly vein, 80
 Which led me once the lively laugh to raise
 Among the merrier wits of former days,

When rival beauties would around me throng,
 And gay ridottos listen to my song !
 Such were I now, as on the festive night, 85
 When Ch——h's charms amaz'd the public fight ;
 When the kind fair one, in a veil so thin
 That the clear gauze was but a lighter skin,
 Mask'd like a virgin just prepar'd to die,
 Gave her plump beauties to each greedy eye ! 90
 On that fam'd night (for then with frolic fire
 Youth fill'd my heart, and humour strung my lyre),
 Pleas'd in the sunshine of her smile to bask,
 I danc'd around her in a devil's mask ;
 And idly chanted an infernal ode, 95
 In praise of all this female tempter show'd.
 'The jocund crowd, who throng'd with me to gaze,
 Extoll'd my unpremeditated lays,
 And Sport, who still of this old revel brags,
 *Styl'd her the first of maids, and me of wags. 100
 Then a light devil, now, reduc'd to limp,
 I am but fit to play the hag-born imp ;

* *Οἷον Διι, Νεστορι τ' ἀνδρῶν.*

See Nestor's speech in the 11th Iliad.

Still, not to cross the frolic of this ball,
 Still as the tortoise Caliban I'll crawl,
 And if with gout my burning ankles flinch, 105
 I'll call it Prospero's tormenting pinch ;
 Still in this shape I'll show them what I am :
 And PEN. shall go as Sycorax my dam."

So spoke the knight ; and spoke with so much weight,
 The listening females saw his word was fate ; 110
 For ne'er did Jove with so resolv'd a brow
 To smiling Love his joyous scheme avow,
 When he concerted, for his special mirth,
 A masquerading on the stage of earth,
 And of the swan's soft plume, or bull's rough hair,
 Order'd the fancy-dress he chose to wear. 116
 From whence let sapient antiquarians show
 The ancient use of masquerades below.

SERENA smil'd to see this joyous fire
 Infuse new youth in her determin'd fire ; 120
 But mute PENELOPE, with half a sigh,
 " With one auspicious and one dropping eye,"
 Heard the firm knight his fixt resolve impart,
 Tickling at once and torturing her heart.

The

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The ball she relish'd, but abhorr'd the task 125
 To hide her beauties in a beldam's mask :
 Miranda's name would better suit her plan,
 A simple maiden, not afraid of man ;
 But us'd, alas ! her brother's law to feel,
 She knows that law admits not of repeal. 130
 Trusting her charms will any garb enrich,
 She deigns to take the habit of a witch.
 Never did sorcerers in the shades of night
 Try to illuminate a filthy sprite
 With fonder efforts, or with worse success, 135
 Than PEN. now labour'd, in this wayward dress,
 To give the sprightly show of living truth
 To the poor ghost of her departed youth.
 As witches o'er their magic cauldron bend,
 Anxious to see their menial imps ascend ; 140
 So in her glass the ancient maiden pries,
 And dreams new graces in her person rise.
 No such delights, whose dear delusions please,
 The mild SERENA in her mirror sees ;
 She, at whose toilet beauty's latent queen 145
 Attends, enchanted with her filial mien,

And o'er her favourite's unconscious face
Breathes her own roseate glow and vivid grace.
She hastes her glittering garments to adjust,
With all the modest charms of sweet distrust, 150
Doubting that beauty, which she doubts alone,
Which dazzles every eye except her own.

The native diffidence which sway'd her mind,
Now feels new terrors with its own combin'd ;
The robes of Ariel to the nymph recall 155

Those disappointments that may yet befall ;
As her fair hands the gauze or tiffue touch,
They fondly warn her not to hope too much.
She feels the friendly counsel they impart,
And caution reigns protector of her heart. 160

The fateful evening comes—the coach attends,
And first the gouty Caliban ascends ;
Then, in deformity's well-suited pride,
Sour Sycorax is station'd by his side ;
And last, with sportive smiles, divinely sweet, 165
Light Ariel perches on the vacant seat.
Fancy now paints the scene of pleasure near,
Yet fluttering gaiety is check'd by fear.

Her

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Her wish to view the festive fight runs high ;
 But the fond nymph remembers, with a sigh, 170
 From hope's keen hand the cup of joy may slip,
 And fall untasted, though it reach the lip.
 As the fine artist, whose nice toils aspire
 To fame eternal by encaustic fire ;
 If he, with grief, has seen the faithless heat 175
 Mar the rich labour it should make compleat,
 When next his hands, with trembling care, confide
 To the fierce element his pencil's pride,
 Watches unceasing the pernicious flame,
 Terror and hope contending in his frame, 180
 While his fair work the dangerous fire sustains,
 Feels it in all his sympathetic veins,
 And at each trivial sound that chance may cause,
 Hears the gem crack, and sees its cruel flaws :
 With such solicitude the panting maid 185
 Past the long street, of every noise afraid.
 Now, while around her rival flambeaus flare,
 And the coach rattles thro' the crowded square,
 She fears some dire mischance must yet befall,
 Some demon snatch her from the promis'd ball ; 190
 And

And dreams no trial more severe than this,
 So bright she figures the new scene of bliss :
 Yet, horrid as it seems, her heart is bent
 To bear e'en this, and bear it with content.

But, whirl'd at length within the porter's gate, 195
 She thinks what perils at the ball may wait ;
 And, as she now alights, the fluttering fair
 Invokes her guardian to protect her there,
 Till thoughts of danger, thoughts of caution, fly
 Before the magic blaze that meets her eye. 200

Th' advancing nymph, at every step she takes,
 Pants with amazement, doubtful if she wakes ;
 Far as her eyes the glittering scene command,
 'Tis all enchantment, all a fairy land ;
 No vestiges of modern pomp appear, 205
 No modern melody salutes her ear :

With Moorish notes the echoing mansion rings,
 And its transmuted form to fancy brings
 The rich * Alhambra of the Moorish kings. }

The peer, who keenly thirsts for fashion's praise, 210
 To gild his revel with no common rays,

* See the views of this palace in Swinburn's Travels.

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Summon'd his modish architect, whose skill
Can all the wishes of caprice fulfil.

His genius, equal to the wildest task,

Gave to the house itself a Gothic mask.

215

The chaplain, that no guest might feel neglect,

As a magician of the Arab sect,

Wav'd a presiding wand throughout the ball,

And well provided for the wants of all.

The peer himself, his prowess to evince,

220

Shines in the semblance of a Moorish prince ;

And round the brilliant mimic hero wait

All pomp and circumstance of Moorish state :

Thro' all his splendid dome no eye could find

Aught unembellish'd, save the master's mind.

225

There, tho' repress'd by courtesy's controul,

Lurks the low mover of the little soul,

Mean vanity ; whose slave can never prove

The heart-refining flame of genuine love.

While her cold joys his abject mind amuse,

230

His thoughts are busied on connubial views.

His house compleat, its decorations plac'd

By the sure hand of fashionable taste,

He

He only wants, to crown his modish life,
 That last and finest moveable—a wife. 235
 She too must prove, to fix his coy desire,
 Such as the eye of fashion will admire.
 His ball is but a jury, to decide
 Upon the merit of his fancied bride.
 If sweet SERENA, on this signal night, 240
 Shines the first idol of the public sight;
 If gallantry's fixt eyes pronounce her fair,
 By the sure sign of one unceasing stare;
 And if, prophetic of her nobler doom,
 Each rival beauty shudders at her bloom; 245
 The die is cast—he weds—the point is clear;
 She cannot slight the vows of such a peer.
 Thus argued in his mind the festive earl,
 And, lest he lightly chuse an awkward girl,
 Wisely conven'd, on this important case, 250
 Each fashionable judge of female grace.
 Here beaux esprits in various figures lurk,
 Of Jew and Gentile, Bramin, Tartar, Turk;
 But of the manly masks, a youthful bard
 Seem'd most to challenge beauty's soft regard : 255
 Adorn'd

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Adorn'd with native elegance, he wore,
 In simplest form, the minstrel dress of yore :
 They call him EDWIN, who around him throng,
 EDWIN, immortaliz'd in Beattie's song ;
 And, sooth to say, within a comely frame, 260
 He bore a heart that answer'd to the name ;
 For this neat habit deck'd a generous youth,
 Of gentlest manners, and sincerest truth.
 Tho' on his birth propitious fortune smil'd,
 No proud parental folly spoil'd the child ; 265
 And genius, more beneficently kind,
 Blest with superior wealth his manly mind.
 Of years he barely counted twenty-one ;
 But, like a brilliant morn, his opening life begun,
 Fain would the muse on this her votary dwell, 270
 And fully paint the youth she loves so well ;
 His figure's charms, the music of his tongue,
 What nymphs his lays allur'd, what lays he sung :
 But higher cares her rambling song controul ;
 SERENA's perils summon all her soul ; 275
 For Spleen, ambitious to exert her force,
 Conscious this trial is her last resource,

Most

Most keenly bent on her pernicious task,
 Has shifted round the ball from mask to mask,
 Watching the moment, with infernal care, 280
 To form with deepest art her final snare,
 And manacle the mind of the unguarded fair. }

It comes, the moment that must fix her lot,
 By her, ah thoughtless maid ! by her forgot ;
 Tho' the light Hours, e'en in their frolic ring, 285
 Trembling perceive the fearful chance they bring,
 And, shuddering at the nymph's terrific state,
 Seem anxious to suspend her doubtful fate.

Now social ease the place of sport supplied,
 The hot oppressive mask was thrown aside, 290
 And beauty shone reveal'd in all her blushing pride. }
 Superior still in features as in form,
 With admiration flush'd, with pleasure warm,
 The gay SERENA every eye allur'd ;
 The hearts her figure won her face secur'd : 295
 A tender sweetness still the nymph maintain'd,
 And modesty o'er all her graces reign'd.
 Well might her soul to brilliant hopes incline,
 A thousand youths had call'd her charms divine ;

A thousand friends had whisper'd in her ear, 300
 That fate had mark'd her for the festive peer.
 Her youthful fancy, tho' by pomp amus'd,
 Wish'd not those offers, which her heart refus'd :
 That tender heart, by no vain pride possess'd,
 With indecisive trembling shook her breast, 305
 Like a young bird, that, fluttering in the air,
 Wishes to build her nest, yet knows not where.

The busy earl, his puny love to raise,
 Hunted the circling whisper of her praise ;
 Heard envy own her lovely charms, tho' loth, 310
 Heard taste attest them with a modish oath ;
 And, nuptial projects thickening in his mind,
 Now his fair partner in the dance rejoin'd.
 As now the sprightly music paus'd, my lord
 Eager resolv'd to touch a softer chord ; 315
 Secure of all repulse, he vainly meant
 Half to display, half hide his fond intent,
 And, in dissembled passion's flowery tropes,
 To sport at leisure with the virgin's hopes :
 For this he fram'd a motley speech, replete 320
 With amorous compliment and vain conceit.

The

The labour'd nothing with complacent pride
 He spoke ; but to his speech no nymph replied :
 For in the moment, the lost fair devotes
 Her willing ear to more attractive notes. 325

The minstrel happen'd near the nymph to walk,
 Rapt with a bosom-friend in secret talk,
 And, at the instant when the earl began
 Half to unfold his matrimonial plan,

EDWIN, in whispers, from the crowd retir'd, 330
 Chanc'd to repeat the sonnet she inspir'd :

The sounds, tho' faint, her recollection caught,
 Drew her quick eye, and fixt her wondering thought.
 Lost in this sweet surprise, she could not hear
 A single accent of the amorous peer. 335

Spleen saw the moment that she sought to gain,
 And perch'd triumphant on the noble's brain.

With jealous envy stung, and baffled pride,

" Contemptuous girl !" with sudden rage, he cried,

" If here to happier youths thy views incline, 340

I want not fairer nymphs who challenge mine.

Thy breast in vain with penitence may burn ;

But, once neglected, I no more return."

148 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Thus loudly speaking, with distemper'd heat,
 Rudely he turn'd, with rancorous scorn replete. 345

SERENA, startled at th' injurious sound,
 Survey'd th' insulting peer, who sternly frown'd ;
 Shame and resentment thro' her bosom rush,
 Swell every vein, and raise the burning blush.
 Love, new-born love, but in its birth conceal'd, 350

Nor to the nymph herself as yet reveal'd,
 And just disdain, and anger's honest flame,
 With complicated power convulse her frame :
 Contending passions every thought confound,
 And in tumultuous doubt her soul is drown'd. 355

Now treacherous pride, who tempts her tongue to trip,
 Forms to a keen reply her quivering lip :
 Insidious Spleen now hovers o'er the fair,
 Deems her half lock'd within her hateful snare ;
 In her new slave preparing to rejoice, 360

To taint her spirit, and untune her voice.
 Hapless SERENA ! what can save thee now ?
 The fiend's dark signet stamps thy clouded brow,
 In thy swoln eye I see the starting drop ;

This fatal shower, ætherial guardian ! stop : 365

Haste

Haste to thy votary, haste, her soul sustain,
 Nor let the trials she has past be vain.
 Ah me ! while yet I speak, with shuddering dread
 I hear the magic girdle's bursting thread.
 This horrid omen, ye kind powers ! avert : 370
 Nor thou, bright zone ! thy brighter charge desert.
 Ah, fruitless prayer ! her panting breast behold !
 See ! the gauze shakes in many a ruffled fold !
 Forc'd from their station by her heaving heart,
 From the strain'd girdle thrice three spangles start :
 Thro' her disorder'd dress a pass they've found, 376
 And fallen, see, they glitter on the ground !—
 O blessed chance ! with life-recalling light
 The glittering monitors attract her sight !
 Like stars emerging from the darken'd pole, 380
 They sparkle safety to her harra's'd soul.
 See ! from her brow the clouds of trouble fly,
 Vexation's tear is vanish'd from her eye !
 Her rosy cheeks with joy's soft radiance burn,
 Like nature smiling at the sun's return ; 385
 The nymph, no more with mental darkness blind,
 Shines the sweet ruler of her rescu'd mind.

Hence, hateful Spleen ! thy fancied prize resign,
 Renounce for ever what shall ne'er be thine ;
 For, conscious of her airy guardian's aid, 390
 She feels new spirit thro' her heart convey'd,
 And, inly blessing this victorious hour,
 Her soul exults in its recover'd power.
 In such mild terms she hails th' insulting peer,
 As Spleen, if mortal, must expire to hear ; 395
 But, driven for ever from the lovely girl,
 The foul fiend riots in the captive earl.
 He answers not ; but, with a fullen air,
 On happier EDWIN, who approach'd the fair,
 Darts such a glance of rage and envious hate, 400
 As Satan cast on Eden's blissful state,
 When on our parents first he fixt his sight,
 And undelighted gaz'd on all delight :
 So doom'd to look, and doom'd such pangs to feel,
 Scornful he turn'd on his elastic heel. 405

" O lovely mildness ! oh angelic maid !
 Deserving homage, tho' to scorn betray'd ;

Rise still, sweet spirit, rise these wrongs above,
 Turn from injurious pride to faithful love ;
 Tho' on my brow no coronet may shine, 410
 Wealth I can offer at thy beauty's shrine,
 And, worthier thee, a heart that worships thine." }
 Thus, with new-kindled love's aspiring flame,
 Spoke the fond youth conceal'd by EDWIN'S name,
 The gallant FALKLAND, rich in inborn worth, 415
 By fortune blest, and not of abject birth.
 Warmly he spoke, with that indignant heat
 With which the generous heart ne'er fails to beat,
 When worth insulted wakens virtuous ire,
 And injur'd beauty sets the soul on fire. 420
 Quick to his voice the startled virgin turn'd,
 With wonder, hope, and joy, her bosom burn'd ;
 With sweet confusion, flurried and amaz'd,
 On his attractive form she wildly gaz'd.
 Full on her thought the friendly visions rush'd ; 425
 Blushing she view'd him, view'd him still and
 blush'd ;
 And, soft affection quickening at the sight,
 Perchance had swoon'd with fullness of delight,

But that her father's voice, with quick controul,
Recall'd the functions of her fainting soul. 430

When on the distant seat, where, fondly fixt,
He view'd the nymph as in the dance she mixt,
He indistinctly heard, with wounded ear,
The spleenful outrage of the angry peer,
Swift at th' imperfect sound, with choler wild, 435
He sprung to succour his insulted child ;
But ere his fury into language broke,
Love calm'd the storm that arrogance awoke.

The sudden burst of FALKLAND's tender flame,
His winning manners, his distinguish'd name, 440
His liberal soul, by fortune's smile carest,
All join'd to harmonize the father's breast.

His fiery thoughts subside in glad surprise,
And to the generous youth he warmly cries :
“ Ingenuous FALKLAND ! by thy frankness won, 445
My willing heart would own thee as my son ;
But on thy hopes SERENA must decide :—
Haste we together from this house of pride.”

So spoke the fire ; for, to her votary kind,
SOPHROSYNE inspir'd his soften'd mind, 450

Speaking,

Speaking, he smil'd, to see that on his word
 The lover hung, and blest the sounds he heard ;
 That his embarrass'd child his sentence caught
 With each tumultuous sign of tender thought ;
 Whose blushes, springing from the heart, declare 455
 The dawn of fondness in the modest fair.
 Th' enchanted youth with ecstasy convey'd
 Forth from the troubled feast the trembling maid.

As the keen sailor, whom his daring soul
 Has drawn, too vent'rous, near the freezing pole ; 460
 Who, having slighted caution's tame advice,
 Seems wedg'd within impervious worlds of ice ;
 If, from each chilling form of peril free,
 At length he reach the unincumber'd sea,
 With joy superior to his transient pain, 465
 Rushes, exulting, o'er th' expansive main :
 Such strong delight SERENA's bosom shar'd,
 When sweet reflection to her heart declar'd,
 That all the trials of her fate were past,
 And love's decisive plaudit seal'd the last. 470
 Her airy guard prepares the softest down,
 From peace's wing, to line the nuptial crown :

Her smiles accelerate the bridal morn,
 And clear her votary's path from every thorn.
 On the quick match the prude's keen censures fall, 475
 Blind to the heavenly power who guided all :
 But mild SERENA scorn'd the prudish play,
 To wound warm love with frivolous delay ;
 Nature's chaste child, not affectation's slave,
 The heart she meant to give, she frankly gave. 480
 Thro' her glad fire no gouty humours run,
 Jocund he glories in his destin'd son.
 PENELOPE herself, no longer seen
 In the sour semblance of tormenting Splœn,
 Buys for her niece the robes of nuptial state, 485
 Nor scolds the mercer once thro' all the long debate.
 For quick dispatch, the honest man of law
 Toils half the night the legal ties to draw ;
 At length th' enraptur'd youth, all forms compleat,
 Bears his sweet bride to his paternal seat ; 490
 On a fair lawn the chearful mansion stood,
 And high behind it rose a circling wood.
 As the blest lord of this extensive reign
 Led his dear partner thro' her new domain,

With

With fond surprise, SERENA soon descried 495

A temple rais'd to her ætherial guide.

Its ornaments she view'd with tender awe,

Their fashion such as she in vision saw ;

For the kind youth, her grateful smile to gain,

Had, from her clear description, deck'd the fane. 500

Joyful he cried, to his angelic wife,

“ Be this kind power the worship of our life !”

He spoke ; and led her to the inmost shrine ;

Here, link'd in rosy bands, two votaries shine ;

The pencil had imparted life to each, 505

With energy that seem'd beyond its reach.

First stood Connubial Love, a manly youth,

Whose bright eye spoke the ardent vows of truth ;

Friendship, sweet smiling, fill'd the second place,

In all the softer charms of virgin grace. 510

Their meeting arms a mystic tablet raise,

Deck'd with these lines, the moral of my lays :—

“ VIRTUE's an ingot of Peruvian gold,

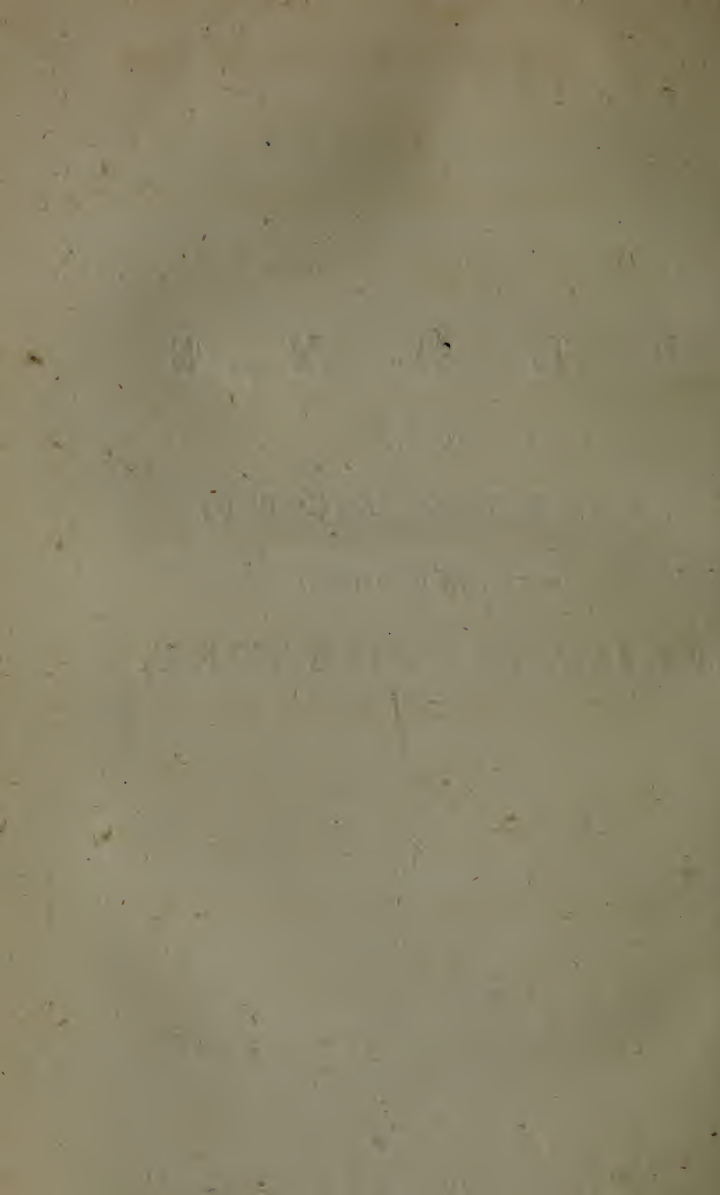
SENSE the bright ore Potosi's mines unfold ;

But TEMPER's image must their use create, 515

And give these precious metals sterling weight.”



P L A Y S
OF
T H R E E A C T S;
WRITTEN FOR A
P R I V A T E T H E A T R E.



T O

HER GRACE THE DUTCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE.

*Non perch' io creda bisognar miei carmi
A chi se ne fa copia da se stessa ;
Ma sol per soddisfare a questo mio
Che ho d' onorarla e di lodar disio.*

ARIOSTO, Canto xxxvii.

THE Great and Fair, in every age and clime,
Receive free homage from the Sons of Rhyme :
Bend, ye ambitious Bards, at Grandeur's shrine !
Be Power your patron ! Wit and Beauty mine !—
To thee, whom elegance has taught to please
By serious dignity, or sportive ease ;

Whom

Whom Virtue hails, at Pleasure's festive rites,
 Chaste Arbiter of Art's refin'd delights :

To thee, fair DEVON ! I breathe this votive
 strain ;

Nor dread th' averted ear of proud Disdain :

For O, if music has not blest my lyre,

A lovelier spirit of th' ætherial choir,

Joy-breathing Gratitude, that hallow'd guest,

Who fires with heavenly zeal the human breast,

Bids my weak voice her swelling note prolong,

And consecrate to thee her tributary song.

When first my anxious Muse's fav'rite child,
 Her young SERENA, artless, simple, wild,

Prefum'd

Presum'd from privacy's safe scenes to fly,
And met in giddy haste the public eye;
Thy generous praise her trembling youth sustain'd,

The smile she dar'd not ask, from thee she gain'd;
And found a guardian in the gracious DEVON,
Kind as the regent of her fancied heaven.—

The flatter'd Muse, whose offspring thou hast blest,
In the fond pride that rules a parent's breast,
Presents thus boldly to thy kind embrace
This little group of her succeeding race.

Blest! if by pathos true to Nature's law,
From thy soft bosom they may haply draw
Those tender sighs, that eloquently show
The virtues of the heart from whence they flow!

Blest ! if by foibles humorously hit,

In the light scenes that aim at comic wit,

They turn thy pensive charms to mirthful
grace,

And wake the sprightly sweetness of thy face !

While thus the proud Enthusiast would
aspire

To change thy beauties with her changing lyre ;

Much as she wants the talent and the right,

To shew thy various charms in varied light,

O might the Muse, intruding on thy bower,

From her fair Patron catch the magic power

Frequent to meet the public eye, and still

That fickle eye with fond amazement fill !

Let

Let her, if this vain wish is lost in air,
 Breathe from her grateful heart a happier
 prayer !—

Howe'er her different fables may give birth
 To fancied woe, and visionary mirth ;
 May all thy griefs belong to Fiction's reign,
 And wound thee only with a pleasing pain !
 May thy light spirit, on the sea of life,
 Elude the rocks of care, the gusts of strife,
 And safely, as the never-sinking buoy,
 Float on th' unnebbig flood of real joy !

EARTHAM.
 January 29th, 1784.

W. HAYLEY.

P R E F A C E.

AS the following Plays were intended only for a private theatre, I have been tempted by that circumstance to introduce a kind of novelty into our language, by writing three comedies in rhyme, though the Comic Muse of our country has been long accustomed to express herself in prose, and her custom has the sanction of settled precept, and successful example. The Antiquarian, indeed, may remind me that Gammer Gurton's Needle, one of the earliest of our old plays, with other comic productions of that rude period, was written in rhyme; and possibly some fastidious enemies of that Gothic jingle, as they affect to call it, may consider the present Publication as nothing more than a relapse into the most barbarous mode of dramatic composition.

For the boldness of an attempt, which has no modern precedent to plead in its behalf, some apology may be due to the Public.

In the first place, I beg it may not be supposed, that by writing a comedy in rhyme, I mean to convey an indirect censure on the contrary practice. No one can prize more highly than I do the many excellent comedies in prose, with which our language is enriched. I am very far from entertaining a wish to overturn the ceremonial which the Comic Muse of England has established; but I hope to find our country as much a friend to toleration in the forms of literature, as in those of religion. The custom of other enlightened nations, both ancient and modern, may be pleaded on this occasion in behalf of verse. Aristophanes, in his play of the Clouds, seems to pride himself on his poetry. Ariosto having written two comedies in prose, converted them both into metre at a maturer period of his life; and Moliere, the unrivalled master of the French comic theatre, who has written admirably both in prose and rhyme, is, I think, most admirable, and most truly comic, when he adheres to the latter.

To the author who attempts a comedy in English rhyme, our language seems to offer an advantage, which the French poet did not enjoy. The Comic Muse of France has chiefly confined herself to that structure of verse, which belongs equally to her Tragic Sister. In the poetry of our nation, this particular measure is appropriated to sportive subjects, and though hitherto not used in Comedy, it possesses to an English ear a very comic vivacity. That it is highly calculated for poems of wit and humour, we have a striking proof in that most exquisite production the Bath Guide. How far it may succeed through the varied scenes of an English play, experiment only can determine. As some readers, on the first sight of a comedy in rhyme, may hastily suppose that the fashion and the materials of the work are borrowed from the Theatre of France, I think it proper to declare, in justice to the writers of that country, that they are by no means answerable for any defects which may be found in these dramatic performances. I am not conscious of having borrowed a single character or situation from any comic writer whatever, either foreign or domestic.—The first of the

three comedies, contained in the present Publication, was founded on a real anecdote related to me by an intimate friend, who, concealing the names of the parties, mentioned their ludicrous adventure as a new and tempting subject for the Comic Muse.—The plan of the second arose in the mind of its author, from his remarking the various effects of Connoisseurship in different characters. An attachment to the fine arts, which is allowed to refine and strengthen the virtues of a manly and a generous spirit, has perhaps a peculiar tendency not only to shew, but to increase the narrowness of a vain and feeble mind; and if such a tendency exists, it is the province of a comic writer to counteract and correct it.—The aim of the third comedy in this collection is to laugh at two distinct species of affectation, very prevalent in our age and country; the affectation of refined sentiment, and the affectation of pompous and pedantic expression. I protest however against personal application: and, to guard against it, let me declare, that this ridicule is levelled, not at the great and respectable Veteran in the field of literature, whose phrases may sometimes be borrowed by a character in the

the

the play ; but at the nameless and servile herd of his awkward imitators.—Vigor and originality of thought give a sanction to the pomp and peculiarity of his language. If singularities of style are united with genius and moral excellence, they are properly regarded with a partial respect ; but when these singularities are preposterously copied, and seem to prevail as a fashion, they become, I apprehend, very fair subjects of sportive satire.

When I reflect what long and established prejudice a rhyming play must encounter—when I remember that even Dryden himself, the most able advocate, and the greatest master of rhyme in our language, has expressly condemned the use of it in comedy—I am alarmed at the hardiness of my attempt ; but when I recollect that time, the most infallible test of literary opinion, has fully shewn the mistake of that immortal Poet, in recommending the use of rhyme in English Tragedy, I am inclined to hope that he might be equally mistaken in supposing it utterly unsuited to our Comic Muse. It may be urged indeed, with great truth, that a comedy in rhyme cannot be so close a copy of Nature as a comedy

medy

*medy in prose, the latter adhering to the very language of common life. But from a sister-art we may borrow, at least a plausible argument in favour of Poetry, on the present occasion. The great master, who has descanted so happily on the principles of Painting, observes with great propriety, in one of his discourses, that “ we are “ not always pleased with the most absolute possible resemblance of an imitation to its original object : cases “ may exist, in which such a resemblance may be even “ disagreeable. I shall only observe, that the effect of “ figures in wax-work, though certainly a more exact “ representation than can be given by painting or sculpture, is a sufficient proof that the pleasure we receive “ from imitation is not increased merely in proportion “ as it approaches to minute and detailed reality : we “ are pleased, on the contrary, by seeing ends answered “ by seeming inadequate means *.”—On these principles, which perhaps are equally just in the two kindred arts, a comedy in Rhyme may be still more entertaining than a comedy, of equal merit in other points, which confines itself to prose ; and a critic who exclaims against*

* Sir Joshua Reynolds’ Discourse of December 1782.

the unnatural effect of a rhyming dialogue, may as justly censure a portrait on canvass, because it is not so exact a copy of life, as an image of coloured wax. In both cases, the artist, whether painter or poet, may be justly called a true and a pleasing copier of Nature, if he preserves as high a degree of resemblance, as his mode of imitation will admit, and embellishes his work with the attractive and almost indispensable graces of ease, spirit, and freedom.

It is said by Voltaire of theatrical composition in general, "Tous les genres sont bons hors le genre ennuyeux." If the present comedies fall not within the class which that lively Writer has so justly proscribed, the Author may be allowed to hope, that his liberal and enlightened readers will look with indulgence on a Publication, which arose from his wish to introduce a striking, and he trusts not a blamable, variety into the amusements of English literature.

REIGN OF
 CHARLES THE FIRST
 IN THE
 YEAR OF HIS MAJESTY'S REIGN
 1642
 BY
 JOHN BURNET
 BISHOP OF SALTHERS

IN TWO VOLUMES.
 THE SECOND VOLUME.
 LONDON,
 Printed by J. Streater, at the Sign of the Gun, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1682.

THE HISTORY OF THE
 REIGN OF
 CHARLES THE FIRST
 IN THE
 YEAR OF HIS MAJESTY'S REIGN
 1642
 BY
 JOHN BURNET
 BISHOP OF SALTHERS

THE
HAPPY PRESCRIPTION;
OR, THE
LADY RELIEVED FROM HER LOVERS:
A COMEDY, IN RHYME.

Persons of the Drama.

SIR NICHOLAS ODDFISH,
SAPPHIC,
DECISIVE,
MORLEY,
COLONEL FELIX,
JONATHAN, Servant to MORLEY;

SELINA, Niece to SIR NICHOLAS,
MRS. FELIX, her Cousin, and Wife to the
COLONEL,
JENNY, Servant to SELINA.

Servants of SIR NICHOLAS, &c.

SCENE *the Country Mansion of the ODDFISH Family.*

THE
HAPPY PRESCRIPTION.

A C T I.

SCENE I.

*Enter Sir Nicholas, in debate with Mrs. Felix
and Selina.*

MRS. FELIX.

WHAT a strange declaration!—it gives me the
spleen;

But 'tis what good Sir Nicholas never can mean.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Not mean it, fair Lady!—by Jupiter, yes!

And my project, you'll see, will be crown'd with success;

I am joyous myself, and 'tis ever my plan

To give those I love all the joy that I can.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

We own it—but joy is like diet, dear Cousin,
 One palate mayn't relish what pleases a dozen ;
 Nor will I allow that my appetite's vicious,
 If perchance I don't like, what you think most delicious.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Rare dainty distinctions !—But can I believe
 That a woman e'er liv'd, since the wedding of Eve,
 Whose heart (tho' most coyly her head might be car-
 ried)

Did not fervently wish to be speedily married ?
 Not to wound your nice ears with the name of desires
 Which youth renders lovely, and nature inspires,
 Your sex, from its weakness, demands a defender,
 Whom pride and affection make watchful and tender ;
 And if my fair Coz is no hypocrite grown,
 The truth of my maxims you'll honestly own ;
 While the wars from your arms the brave Colonel detain,
 Is the want of a husband the source of no pain ?

MRS. FELIX.

There, indeed, you have touch'd me a little too near,
 My Soldier, you know, to my soul is most dear ;
 I own—and my frankness you never will blame,
 I'd purchase his presence with aught but his fame.

SIR

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well said, thou dear, honest, and warm-hearted wife ;
 For thy truth may good angels still watch o'er his life,
 And while others the rough field of slaughter are tread-
 ing,

Send him home full of glory, to dance at our wedding !
 For a wedding we'll have to enliven us all,
 And Hymen's bright altar shall warm the old hall.
 For my Niece ere I die 'tis my wish to provide,
 And ere two months are past I *will* see her a bride.
 I'm resolv'd—and you know that my neighbours all say;
 Sir Nicholas Oddfish will have his own way.

MRS. FELIX.

Selina, dear Sir, wants no other protection,
 While her life glides in peace by your gentle direction.
 She thinks, and, I own, I approve her remark,
 In conjugal cares 'tis too soon to embark :
 Her bosom untouch'd by Love's dangerous dart,
 Fate has not yet shewn her the man of her heart.

SIR NICHOLAS.

The man of her heart !—these nonsensical fancies
 You light-headed females pick out of romances.
 That I am no tyrant you know very well,
 So, Cousin, don't teach my good Niece to rebel !

I am no greedy guardian, who thinks it his duty
 On the altar of Plutus to sacrifice beauty ;
 Whose venal barbarity, justly abhorr'd,
 Ties a lovely young girl to an old crippled lord,
 And basely, to gain either rank or estate,
 Make her swear she will love, what she cannot but hate.
 From such a protector Heaven guard my dear Niece !
 I wish her to wed that her joys may increase ;
 And the deuce must be in the strange girl who discovers

No man to her mind in such plenty of lovers.
 To no very great length will my cruelty run,
 If from twenty admirers I bid her chuse one.

MRS. FELIX.

But why, dear Sir Nicholas, why in such haste ?

SIR NICHOLAS.

'Tis thus that my projects are ever disgrac'd
 With the false names of hurry and precipitation,
 Because I abhor silly procrastination ;
 That thief of delight, who deludes all our senses,
 Who cheats us for ever with idle pretences,
 By whom, like the dog in the fable, betray'd,
 We let go the substance to snap at the shade.

To seize present time is the true art of life ;
'Tis Time who now cries, make Selina a wife !
The season is come, I've so long wish'd to see
From the moment I dandled her first on my knee :
She, you know, to my care was bequeath'd by my

Brother,

And having this child, I ne'er wish'd for another :
Thro' life I have kept myself single for her ;
Her interest, her joy, to my own I prefer.

SELINA.

Your kindness, dear Sir, I can never repay.

SIR NICHOLAS.

In truth, my dear damsel, you easily may ;
I demand no return so enormously great ;
I ask but a boy to possess my estate.

SELINA.

Lord, Uncle, how come such odd thoughts in your
head ?

MRS. FELIX.

From his heart, I assure you—'tis pleasantly said ;
A fair stipulation—both parties agreed,
The compact, I trust, in due time will succeed :
But patience, dear Knight, you will have your desire,
Nor wait very long for a young little 'squire.

SIR NICHOLAS.

The cold stream of Patience ne'er creeps in my veins,
 But the wish my heart forms my quick spirit attains.
 I'm none of your chill atmospherical wretches,
 Whose affections are subject to starts and to catches ;
 Whose wish, like a weather-cock, veering about,
 Now turns towards hope, and now changes to doubt :
 No, mine, like the needle without variation,
 Only looks to one point, and that point's Consumma-
 tion.

I want to behold this young urchin arise,
 Before I have lost or my legs or my eyes,
 That I may enjoy all his little vagaries,
 As the changeable season of infancy varies.
 I long to be moulding his heart and his spirit ;
 To shew him the fields he is born to inherit ;
 Lead him round our rich woods, while my limbs are
 yet limber,
 And tell the young rogue how I've nurs'd up his timber ;
 That when the worn thread of my life is untwisted,
 He long may remember that I have existed ;
 And when my old frame in our monument rests,
 As he walks by my grave with a few worthy guests,

He

He thus to some warm-hearted friend may address him,
Here lies my odd, honest, old Uncle—God bless him !

MRS. FELIX.

Thank Heaven, dear Cousin, your hale constitution
Shews not the least sign of a near dissolution.

SELINA.

To make your life happy, whate'er the condition,
Has been, my dear Uncle, my highest ambition ;
To fulfil every wish that your fancy can frame,
Still is, as it ought to be, ever my aim :
But if by your voice I am doom'd to the altar,
With terror and pain my weak accents must falter,
Unless my kind stars a new lover should send me,
Unlike all the swains who now deign to attend me.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Nice wench ! do you want the whole world to adore
you ?

Would you have all the men of the earth rang'd be-
fore you ?

For, thanks to your charms, and to fortune's kind
bounty,

You may rank in your train all the youth of our county ;
And, chuse whom you will, if the man has but worth,
And is nearly your equal in wealth and in birth,

I give my consent—you are free from restriction ;
 But I will not be plagu'd with perverse contradiction,
 I will see you wed without any delay :
 Your two fittest lovers are coming to-day ;
 Young Sapphic, whose verses delight all the fair,
 And Dicky Decisive, Sir Jacob's next heir :
 Both young and both wealthy, both comely and clever,
 To gain you, no doubt, each will warmly endeavour ;
 For they come for a month, by my own invitation,
 On purpose to found my dear girl's inclination :
 I have said to them both, and no man can speak fairer,
 Let him, who can please her most, win her and wear her.

SELINA, *aside to Mrs. Felix.*

Good angels defend me !

MRS. FELIX.

I see nothing frightful :

Our month with such guests must be very delightful ;
 When Sapphic's soft verses incline us to doze,
 Dick will keep us awake with satirical prose.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Don't cross me, I say ! nor mislead my good Niece !
 By Jove, if she thwarts me with any caprice,
 Like a certain old Justice, I'll ring up my maids,
 And marry the first of the frank-hearted jades ;

For

For perverse contradiction I never will bear,
But provide for myself a more dutiful heir.

MRS. FELIX.

Dear Cousin, in spite of his Worship's decision,
You cannot be certain of such a provision :
Attempts of that nature are subject to fail.

SIR NICHOLAS.

My designs, you shall see, Madam, always prevail :
For if this nice Gipsy, by your machination,
Declines every offer, to give me vexation,
Like my late jolly neighbour, Sir Timothy Trickum,
Who vindictively married the frail Molly Quickum,
I'll make sure of the matter, and chuse me a wife,
With an heir ready plac'd on the threshold of life :
For, as I have said, tho' a foe to restriction,
I never will suffer perverse contradiction.
You now know my mind, which no mask ever covers,
So farewell, and prepare to receive your two lovers.

[Exit.

MRS. FELIX.

Go thy way, thou strange mixture of sense and of
blindness !

A model at once of oppression and kindness,

N 4

Thy

Thy will, thou odd compound of goodness and whim,
Is a stream, against which it is treason to swim ;
Yet we must cross the current—

SELINA.

Dear Cousin, say how !

Direct opposition he will not allow ;
What can you devise as a plan of prevention ?
How divert his keen spirit from this new intention ?
I had much rather die than be ever united
To one of the lovers, that he has invited :
My heart has a thorough aversion to both :
Yet to make him unhappy I'm equally loth ;
When I think what I owe to his tender protection,
The worst of all ills is to lose his affection.

MRS. FELIX.

Dear Girl, your warm gratitude gives you new charms :
'Tis an amiable fear which your bosom alarms,
And I from your Uncle's quick humour would screen you,
Not loosen the bands of affection between you.
He merits your love, and you know he has mine ;
Yet we somehow must baffle his hasty design,
Nor suffer his whim thus to make you a wife,
To repent the rash business the rest of his life.
Take courage ! kind chance may assist us—

SELINA.

SELINA.

I doubt it,

Yet Heaven knows how we shall manage without it ;
For when his heart's set on a favourite scheme,
His ardor and haste, as you know, are extreme ;
Like a med'cine ill-tim'd, opposition is vain,
And inflames the disorder 'twas meant to restrain.

MRS. FELIX.

In his fevers indeed there is no intermission ;
And thanks gentle Coz ! to your soft disposition !
So sweet and compliant your temper has been,
You have taught him to think contradiction a sin ;
And here all around him confirm that belief,
His vassals all bow to the nod of their chief.
Here, shut from the world in this rural dominion,
No mortal opposes his will or opinion ;
And thus he is spoil'd—Politicians all say,
Human nature's not fashion'd for absolute sway.

SELINA.

'Tis true, tho' the world, as you say, think him odd,
In this sphere he is held a diminutive god :
And when I behold how his fortune is spent,
In suppressing vexation, and spreading content ;

When I hear all the poor his kind bounty expressing,
 And thoroughly know how he merits their blessing,
 My feelings with theirs in his eulogy join,
 And confess, that his nature is truly divine.

M R S. F E L I X.

Thou excellent Girl ! if such fondness and zeal
 For a warm-hearted, whimsical Uncle you feel,
 With what fine sensations your bosom will glow,
 What tender attachment your temper will shew,
 When your fortunate lord Love and Hymen invest
 With higher dominion o'er that gentle breast !
 But tell me, dear Cousin—be honest—declare,
 Has no young secret swain form'd an interest there ?
 I suspect—but don't let my suspicion affright you,
 Tho' the good Knight's rare virtues amuse and de-
 light you,
 From this gloomy old hall you would wish to get free,
 Had not Cupid preserv'd you from feeling *ennui* :
 Come tell me the name of the favourite youth ;
 I am sure I guess right.

S E L I N A.

No, in sad sober truth,
 I never have seen, in the course of my life,
 A mortal to whom I should chuse to be wife.

M R S.

MRS. FELIX.

Ye stars, what a pity!—I wish I could learn
That my Colonel from India would shortly return,
Both for your sake and mine; for our present distress
He would speedily turn into joyous success;
As his regiment must some young hero afford,
Who might throw at your feet both himself and his
sword,

What say you, my dear, to a soldier?—

Enter Jenny.

JENNY.

Oh! Madam,

Here's young Mr. Sapphic— I vow, if I had them,
I'd give fifty pounds had you seen how politely
He begg'd me to tie a sweet nosegay up tightly,
Which is jolted to pieces.—Well, he's a sweet beau;
And now with his pencil he's writing below,
I believe 'tis a posy he writes it so neatly,
And I'm sure 'tis fine verse, Ma'am, it sounded so
sweetly.

MRS. FELIX.

Oh charming! his vows will be very sublime,
And I trust we shall hear his proposals in rhyme.

SELINA.

SELINA.

How can you, dear Cousin, so cruelly jest in
 A business you know I am really distressed in?
 I shall certainly forfeit my Uncle's protection,
 For I never can wed where I feel no affection.
 Do help me.

MRS. FELIX.

Good Girl, this perplexity smother,
 And think your two lovers will banish each other:
 There's much to be hop'd from our present affairs.

JENNY.

O, Ma'am, Mr. Sapphic is coming up stairs.

(Aside as she goes out.)

I am mightily pleas'd with this marrying plan,
 And I hope in my spirit that he'll be the man.

[Exit.]

Enter Sapphic.

SAPPHIC.

Fair Ladies, the moments have seem'd to be hours,
 While I stopt in your hall to adjust a few flowers:
 For the season, I'm told, they're uncommonly fine;
 But I still wish the tribute more worthy the shrine.

[Bowling and presenting them to Selina.]

SELINA.

SELINA.

Mr. Sapphic is always extremely polite :
 These roses, indeed, are a wonderful sight :
 You are far better florists than we are.

MRS. FELIX.

My dear,

Mr. Sapphic has magic to make them appear,
 And Flora is brib'd, by the songs he composes,
 To produce for her poet extempore roses ;
 Into this early bloom all her plants are bewitch'd :
 But you do not observe how the gift is enrich'd,
 Here's a border of verse, if my eyes don't deceive me.

SELINA, *aside to Mrs. Felix.*

Dear Cousin, you'll read it—I pray you, relieve me ;
 I shall blush like a fool at each civil expression.

MRS. FELIX, *aside to Selina, taking the paper.*

Now, with emphasis just, and with proper discretion,

(Mrs. Felix reads.)

“ Ye happy flowers, give and receive perfume
 “ As on Selina's fragrant breast ye bloom :
 “ From earth, tho' not arrang'd in order nice,
 “ Ye are transplanted into Paradise ;
 “ If on that spot ye languish into death,
 “ 'Twill be from envy of her sweeter breath.”

'Tis

'Tis a delicate compliment, tender and pretty,
What original spirit ! how graceful and witty !

S A P P H I C.

Dear Ma'am, you're too good, to find any thing in it,
'Tis a mere hasty trifle—the work of a minute :
On the anvil I had not a moment to hammer.
And I fear, in my haste I have sinn'd against grammar.

M R S. F E L I X.

All slight imperfections I never regard
When I meet with such vigor of thought in a bard,
With a fancy so brilliant—

S A P P H I C.

O ! Ma'am, you're too kind ;
But candor's the test of an amiable mind.
I wish that your taste all our Critics might guide,
To soften that rigor with which they decide.

M R S. F E L I X.

From Critics, dear Sir, you have little to fear.
If Mr. Decisive himself had been here,
He must have been charm'd with this sweet *jeu d'esprit*,
Which, as he is coming to-day, he shall see.
I am eager to hear how his wit will applaud it :
To conceal it would be of due praise to defraud it.

S A P P H I C.

S A P P H I C.

In Mercy's name, Ladies, I beg your protection,
Preserve my poor rhymes from Decisive's inspection ;
Consider how hasty—

M R S. F E L I X.

Say rather how sprightly—

S A P P H I C.

Compos'd in a moment—

M R S. F E L I X.

Produc'd so politely !

S A P P H I C.

He'll cut them to atoms !

M R S. F E L I X.

Dear Sir he's your friend,

And I thought he had seen all the poems you penn'd :
I was told that to him your long works you rehearse—
Does Mr. Decisive himself write in verse ?

S A P P H I C.

I wish from my soul that he did, now and then :
But he uses the pen-knife much more than the pen,
And too freely has slash'd all who write in the nation,
To give them an opening for retaliation.
My old friend Decisive has honour and wit ;
To the latter, indeed, he makes most things submit ;

And

And thinks it fair sport, as a friend or a foe,
 To knock down a Bard by a flaming *bon mot*.
 To your sex indeed his chief failings I trace ;
 For the fair-ones so flatter'd his figure and face,
 That too early he ceas'd the chaste Muses to follow,
 And being Adonis, would not be Apollo.

MRS. FELIX.

Yet he has much fancy.

SAPPHIC.

O, Madam, no doubt,
 And genius, that study would soon have brought out:
 Had his thoughts been less turn'd to his legs and his
 looks,

Ere this he'd have written some excellent books :
 'Tis pity such parts should thro' indolence fall ;
 But he never composes, and reads not at all.

SELINA.

Not read, Mr. Sapphic ! you surely mistake ;
 Your friend cannot be an illiterate rake :
 Our neighbours, who lately from London came down,
 Declare, that his word forms the taste of the town.

SAPPHIC.

Dear Madam, the business is easily done ;
 He judges all authors, but never reads one.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

I'm sure he must own this *impromptu* is sweet,
And I vow he shall read it—

SAPPHIC.

Dear Ma'am, I intreat,
I conjure you to spare me; this earnest petition
I know you will grant me—

MRS. FELIX.

On this one condition,
That for six lines suppress'd you indulge me with twenty:
Come, shew us your pocket-book—there you have
plenty
Of tender poetical squibs for the Fair.

SAPPHIC, *taking out his pocket-book.*

Dear Ma'am, here is nothing.

MRS. FELIX.

A volume, I swear,
O, charming!—well, now you're an excellent man;
'Tis stuff'd like a pincushion—

SAPPHIC.

Yes, Ma'am— with bran.

MRS. FELIX.

Fie, fie, you're too modest, and murder my meaning;
What a harvest is here! yet I ask but a gleanings:

It would not be fair to seize all the collection,
 Tho' all is most certainly worthy inspection.
 Indulge us, dear Sir : come, I'll take no refusal.

S A P P H I C.

Indeed, Ma'am, here's nothing that's fit for perusal.

M R S. F E L I X.

There are fifty fine things, and one can't chuse amiss.

S A P P H I C, *taking out a paper.*

Here's one new little song—

M R S. F E L I X.

Well then, let me have this.

S A P P H I C, *after given a paper.*

They all are so jumbled, I fear I am wrong ;
 I meant to have shewn you a new little song,
 Which was written last week on the ball at our
 races,
 Where I heard the Miss Trotters compar'd to the
 Graces ;

I could not help saying, 'twas very profane,
 It was taking the name of the Graces in vain.

M R S. F E L I X *reads.*

“ On seeing Selina and Jenny near each other in
 “ the garden.”

S A P P H I C.

S A P P H I C.

O mercy, dear Madam, you must not read those !
A stanza unfinish'd.—

M R S. F E L I X.

How sweetly it flows !

Selina, pray hear it.

S E L I N A, *aside to* M R S. F E L I X.

Dear Cousin, enough !

How can you delight in his horrible stuff !

M R S. F E L I X *reads*.

“ Tho' each in the same garden blows,

“ The poet must be crazy,

“ Who, when invited by the rose,

“ Can stoop to pick the daisy.”

S E L I N A, *aside to* M R S. F E L I X.

If you love me, dear Cousin, assist me, I pray,

To end all this nonsense, and get him away.—

Pray, Sir, when you came, was my Uncle below ?

S A P P H I C.

He's abroad, Ma'am, your servant inform'd me—

S E L I N A.

O No !

You have heard he is building a temple to Pan,

And we hope that your taste may embellish the plan :

At the end of the walk, in his favourite grove,
 Where there formerly stood an old ruin'd alcove,
 You'll find him ; and as 'tis an art you are skill'd in,
 'Twill please him to know what you think of the building.

M R S. F E L I X.

Ay do, Mr. Sapphic, inspect what is done,
 For the workmen all blunder'd when first they begun :
 Your opinion, I'm sure, will oblige the good Knight.

S E L I N A.

An inscription, he once said, he wish'd you to write.

S A P P H I C.

Dear Madam !—the hint is delightful, I vow ;
 To the God of Arcadia I hasten to bow :
 I shall find the good Knight in the midst of the dome ;
 I am heartily glad that he is not from home.
 We shall surely contrive something clever between us,
 And the Muse will compose by the order of Venus.

[*Bows tenderly to Selina, and Exit.*]

S E L I N A.

How could you so praise that impertinent creature ?
 And praise him without discomposing a feature !—
 I could not have thought, before this conversation,
 That your frankness could turn into such adulation.

M R S.

MRS. FELIX:

The world, my dear Child, is to you quite unknown ;
 When you see it, you'll find such discourse is the *ton* ;
 Fine folks in high life learn to praise with great glee
 Such persons and things as they sicken to see.
 To me your best thanks for my speeches are due—
 By thus flattering the Poet, I surely serve you ;
 He will now play the Sky-lark instead of the Dove,
 And stun me with songs, while you're fav'd from his
 love.

Enter Jenny.

JENNY.

Dear Ma'am, now I hope Mr. Sapphic's quite blest,
 For he flies thro' the walks like a bird to his nest.—
 He's a sweet pretty gentleman.

MRS. FELIX, *aside to Selina.*

 This, if I shew it,
 Will soon banish Jenny's regard for the poet :—
 Jenny, see what your friend Mr. Sapphic has written.

JENNY.

Dear Ma'am, with his verses I always am smitten.

(Having read the stanza.)

A Daify indeed ! to be sure I am neat,
 But tho' I'm a servant, I hope I am sweet.

When he makes my young Mistress a Rose or a Lily,
 He might turn me at least to a Daffy-down-dilly,
 But a Daisy, forsooth ! with no fragrance at all !—
 I'll cross him for this—

SELINA.

What's that noise in the hall ?

JENNY.

As sure as I live 'tis your other gay Spark,
 For I saw a new chaise driving into the park,—
 I'll see, Ma'am.

(Aside going out.)

I'll shew this fine Poet a trick—

A Daisy ! that no one but children will pick. [*Exit.*]

MRS. FELIX.

'This simile Jenny I see cannot swallow,
 And her anger may ruin this son of Apollo ;
 For in courtship this maxim is often display'd,
 He has half lost the Mistress who loses the Maid,

Enter Decisive,

DECISIVE.

Alone, my dear Ladies !— they told me below,
 Our friend Sapphic was here, your poetical Beau ;
 I was almost afraid that my sudden intrusion
 Might check the rich stream of some lyric effusion.

(To

(To Selina.)

I am happy to see you so lovely to-day ;
But I hope I've not frightened your Poet away.

SELINA.

O no—Mr. Sapphic had bid us adieu—

MRS. FELIX.

And not without saying some fine things of you :
He declares, that with those brilliant parts you possess,
'Tis a sin you ne'er send any work to the press.

DECISIVE.

Good Sapphic !—In truth 'tis his comfort to think
The whole duty of man lies in spilling of ink ;
And at Paradise gate his large volumes of metre
Will, I hope, be allow'd a fair pass by Saint Peter.

MRS. FELIX.

Then the Saint must be free from your critical spirit,
For I know you have little esteem for their merit ;
You're a rigorous judge, and to poets terrific.

DECISIVE.

I wish my friend's Muse was not quite so prolific :
But in rhymes, when a child, I have heard he would
squeak,
And so proved a poet before he could speak ;

On his death-bed, I doubt not, he'll still think of verse,
And groan out a rhyme to his doctor or nurse.

MRS. FELIX.

I fancy your favourite reading is prose ;
Here's a new set of travels, pray have you read those ?

DECISIVE, *taking the book.*

This author is lucky to meet with a buyer :
A traveller's but a soft word for a liar.
Such works may please those who have ne'er been
abroad,

But men, who have travell'd, perceive all the fraud,

MRS. FELIX.

Is the work so deceitful ! it seems you have read it ?

DECISIVE,

Not a syllable, Madam—

MRS. FELIX.

Pray who then has said it ?

DECISIVE,

Not a soul that I know—but such books are a trade,
And I perfectly know how those volumes are made.

MRS. FELIX.

'Tis a work, I am told, that has great reputation
Both for wit and for truth—

DECISIVE.

DECISIVE.

We're a credulous nation—

MRS. FELIX.

Pray what kind of books are your favourite study?

DECISIVE.

I find modern works only make the brain muddy,
As my friends grew by reading more awkward than wife,
And ruin'd their persons and clouded their eyes ;
I have wisely resolv'd not to read any more,
Since each living author is turn'd to a bore.

MRS. FELIX.

How can you so waste all your bright mental powers?
'Tis pity you men have not such works as ours—
What d'ye say to my knotting?

(Takes out her work.)

DECISIVE.

Your box wants a hinge.
And I'll give you a much better pattern for fringe;
I brought it from France.

MRS. FELIX.

Now I see, my good friend,
There is no kind of work which your skill cannot
mend ;

In

202 THE HAPPY PRESCRIPTION :

In all arts you possess a distinguishing head,
From building a temple to knotting a thread.

DECISIVE.

A-propos of a temple—pray has the good Knight
Rais'd his altar to Pan?—he had fix'd on the site.
Is the structure begun?—I have not seen his plan—

MRS. FELIX.

Then hasten, and pay your devotions to Pan,
Sir Nicholas now in his vestibule stands,
To guide all his workmen, and quicken their hands ;
And Sapphic is gone to attend the good Knight,
And try what inscription his genius can write.

DECISIVE.

Poor Pan ! by the Graces thou'rt left in the lurch ;
Thy temple will look like a trim parish church,
With Sapphic's inscriptions, like scraps of the Bible,
Put up, as the Church-wardens say, in a *libel*.

MRS. FELIX.

Indeed we much fear so—pray haste to inspect it,
And exert all your exquisite taste to correct it.

DECISIVE.

Ma'am I'll do what I can, for it puts me in wrath
To see a fine temple disgrac'd by a Goth. [Exit.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

Well, my dear, your two Lovers, like true men of
fashion,

Do not pester you much with the heat of their passion.
You'll be quite at your ease—thanks to Pan and the
Muse!

Enter Jenny, hastily.

JENNY.

News! news! my dear Ladies, most excellent news!

SELINA.

The girl is quite wild!

MRS. FELIX.

What transports you so, Jenny?

JENNY.

I've news for you, Madam, that's well worth a guinea:
I have news from the Colonel—

MRS. FELIX.

A letter! Where is it?

JENNY.

No, Ma'am, here's a stranger arriv'd on a visit,
And he comes from the place where the Colonel is
fighting,

MRS. FELIX.

And with letters for me?

JENNY.

J E N N Y.

Madam, that I'm not right in ;
 For I run from his man when I got half my story ;
 But the Colonel, he says, is all riches and glory.

M R S. F E L I X.

Dear girl ! that's enough ; through my life I shall feel
 Due regard for thy warm and affectionate zeal.
 But where is this Stranger ?

J E N N Y.

Just walk'd to my Master.
 His poor man has met with a cruel disaster ;
 He was wounded in battle.

S E L I N A.

Pray treat him with care.—
 In your joy, my dear Cousin, I heartily share.

M R S. F E L I X.

This Stranger's a jewel for you from the East ;
 He's a Captain, I hope, my dear Jenny, at least.

J E N N Y.

Ah, Madam ! my fancy suppos'd him so too ;
 But we're both in the wrong, and for Miss he won't do,
 For I learnt from his man he is only a Doctor.

M R S. F E L I X.

Poor Jane ! how the difference of title has shock'd her !

For

For my part I can't find, by my reason or feeling,
That the art of destroying excels that of healing :
We may equally love the professors of both.

J E N N Y.

That Miss tho' should marry a Doctor, I'm loth.

'M R S. F E L I X.

Come, my dear, let us meet 'em—I can't rest above—
How slowly fly letters from hands that we love !

End of A C T I.

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

Enter Jenny and Jonathan.

J E N N Y.

C O M E, dear Mr. Jonathan, tell me the whole :
An account of a battle I love to my soul ;
There is nothing on earth I so truly delight in,
As to hear a brave Soldier discourse about fighting.—
So the Colonel was wounded, you say, near the wall :
Whereabouts was the shot ? Did he instantly fall ?

J O N A T H A N.

JONATHAN.

No ; recoiling a little, he rush'd on again,
 And fought like a lion, made fiercer by pain ;
 Tho' a curst keen arrow, an Indian let fly,
 Pierc'd the bone of his cheek just below the right eye.
 'Twas a horrible wound ! but it could not appall him.

JENNY.

O mercy ! that such a hard fate should befall him.
 Alas ! I'm afraid that his fine manly face
 Must have lost by the scar all its spirit and grace.
 Does he look very hideous ?

JONATHAN.

No ; thanks to my Master,
 You can hardly perceive that he e'er wore a plaister.
 There never was known a more wonderful cure ;
 But kind Heaven assists my good Master, I'm sure ;
 Without it, the skill of no mortal could save
 The many brave lads he has kept from the grave.
 You would weep with delight to behold him surrounded
 With a hundred fine fellows, once horribly wounded ;
 Who with thanks for their lives are still eager to
 greet him,
 And hail him with blessings whenever they meet him.

J E N N Y.

God reward him, say I, for the good he has done ;
And of those he has fav'd I'm glad you are one.

J O N A T H A N.

Aye, twice he preserv'd me when all thought me dead,
And once brought me off at the risque of his head.
It was not his business to mix in the strife,
And some thought him mad when he ventur'd his life
To bring off a poor mangled private like me ;
But I've still a heart left, in this trunk that you see,
Which loves the brave spirit who snatch'd me from
death,

And will serve him, I hope, till my very last breath.

J E N N Y.

Your scenes of hard service, I hope, are all over ;
It is now fairly time you should both live in clover.
Your Master, I trust, has brought home as much
treasure

As will make him a parliament-man at his pleasure ;
And, to recompense you for the wound in your arm,
Perhaps he will buy you a snug little farm.

J O N A T H A N.

When a Gentleman comes from the East, my good girl,
You all think he is loaded with diamonds and pearl ;

You

You fancy his treasure too great to be told,
 And suppose he possesses a mountain of gold.
 A few daring blades, by a bold kind of stealth,
 Have indeed from the Indies brought home so much
 wealth,
 That with all their keen senses they ne'er could em-
 ploy it,
 And have dy'd from the want of a heart to enjoy it :
 But some hundred brave lads, whom gay youth led to
 enter
 That promising region of hope and adventure,
 Have toil'd many years in those rich burning climes,
 With small share of their wealth, and with none of
 their crimes.

Now my Master and I both belong to this tribe ;
 Not a single Nabob have we kill'd for a bribe ;
 And to tell you a truth, which I hope you'll not
 doubt,

We're as poor and as honest as when we set out.

J E N N Y.

What ! your Master still poor in so thriving a trade !
 And, with patients so rich, has he never been paid
 For the wounds he has heal'd ?

J O N A T H A N,

JONATHAN.

Yes, my dear, for his fees
 I know he has touch'd many thousand rupees ;
 But the sight of distress he could never endure ;
 What he took from the rich he bestow'd on the poor.

JENNY.

Well, Heaven will pay him, no doubt, in due season.
 But what brings him home ?—I would fain know the
 reason

Why he leaves that rich land in the bloom of his life :
 I suppose, from the want of a cherry-cheek'd wife ?
 They say those black wenches are sad nasty creatures,
 And tho' they've fine shapes they have horrible features.
 Does he want a white sweetheart ? or has he a Black ?

JONATHAN.

'Tis indeed a white woman that brings us both back :
 But, alas ! 'tis an old one—my Master, it seems,
 Has a fond simple mother that's troubled with dreams,
 And he, like a tender and soft-hearted youth,
 Resigns his fine prospect, and comes home, forsooth,
 Because the old dame has express'd her desires
 To see him in England before she expires :
 And egad, since he's come she will live long enough,
 For she seems to be made of good durable stuff.

VCL. V.

P

JENNY.

J E N N Y.

Well, now I shall love him a hundred times more
 Than I did for the stories you told me before.
 God bless the kind soul ! who behaves to his mother
 As if he well knew he could ne'er have another ;
 And were he my son, I could not live without him ;
 I could stay here all day while you're talking about
 him.—

But 'tis time to be gone ; we must both disappear,
 For the Colonel's sweet Wife and your Master are here.

J O N A T H A N.

Stop, I must peep at her ;—she's as bright as the day !

J E N N Y.

And her heart is as good as her spirit is gay—
 Come I'll shew you our walks—we may get out
 this way. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Mrs. Felix and Morley.

M R S. F E L I X.

Dear excellent Friend, since I owe to your worth
 The safety of what I most value on earth,
 With those it loves best my heart yields you a place,
 And I clasp your kind hand with a sister's embrace.
 To judge of the man whom such service endears,
 I want not the tardy acquaintance of years ;

But

But in strong tho' quick ties, that no chances can sever,
In an instant he seizes my friendship for ever :
And had I much less obligation to you,
My regard and esteem I should still think your due,
From the picture my Felix has drawn of your mind.

MORLEY.

His warm soul to his friends is most partially kind :
But such as I am I most truly am yours ;
Your goodness my grateful attachment ensures,
And my heart with proud transport your friendship
embraces.

Tho' I ne'er gaz'd before on your personal graces,
I've beguil'd some long weeks of hard wearisome duty
With frequent discourse on your virtues and beauty ;
And I own for the Colonel it rais'd my esteem,
To mark with what pleasure he dwelt on the theme.

MRS. FELIX.

You're an excellent creature to sooth a fond Wife,
Who regards her Lord's love hardly less than his life ;
But since you've replied with good-humour so steady
To the ten thousand questions I've ask'd you already,
I'll spare you to-day, and, if 'tis in my power,
Mention Felix's name only once in an hour.

That my thoughts to the Indies no longer may roam,
 Let me talk to you now about matters at home ;
 Your counsel may make our perplexity less,
 And finish our odd tragi-comic distress.
 First tell me, and speak without any disguise,
 (Tho' I fancy I read all your thoughts in your eyes)
 What d'ye think of my Cousin ?

MORLEY:

Her graces indeed
 The glowing description of Felix exceed ;
 Tho' in praising her, oft he with pleasure has smil'd,
 Like a father describing his favourite child.
 For my part, I think she is lavishly blest
 With those beauties by which the pure mind is express'd,
 That her heart is with truth and with tenderness warm,
 That sweet sensibility shines in her form ;
 A form, on which no man his eye ever turn'd
 Without feeling his breast in her welfare concern'd.
 'Tis the lot of such graces, wherever they dwell,
 None can see their soft mistress and not wish her well.

MRS. FELIX.

Very gallantly said, and the praise is her due—
 But how came her Lovers so well known to you ?

MORLEY.

MORLEY.

Her Lovers !—dear Madam, I hope you're in jest—
 Or if by their vows your sweet Friend is address'd,
 Heaven grant, for the peace of her delicate mind,
 That her hand may be never to either resign'd !

MRS. FELIX.

From my soul, I assure you, I join in your prayer ;
 But whence does it spring ?

MORLEY.

I will freely declare,
 Tho' they're both men of fortune, fair birth, and good
 name,
 With figures that set some young nymphs in a flame ;
 Tho' at each, many ladies are ready to catch
 At what the world calls, a most excellent match ;
 Yet, if I have read your fair Cousin aright,
 A bosom so tender, a spirit so bright,
 Must be wretched with such a companion for life,
 As each of these Lovers would prove to his Wife.

MRS. FELIX.

You are right ; but their characters where could you
 know ?

MORLEY.

I knew them at college a few years ago,

Before, by a whimsical odd sort of fate,
 And some family losses, too long to relate,
 In Europe my views of prosperity ceas'd,
 And chance sent me forth to my friends in the East.

MRS. FELIX.

Pray what sort of youths were those two modish men?

MORLEY.

You now find them both what they seem'd to me then;
 Two characters form'd like most young men of fashion,
 Whose cold selfish pride is their sovereign passion:
 In each, tho' they're men of an opposite turn,
 The same heart-freezing vanity still you discern,
 To indulge that dear vanity, each still displays
 All the force of his mind, tho' in different ways.
 Thence, in spinning weak verse Sapphic's toil never
 ends,

And Decisive ne'er stops in deriding his friends;
 Each equally fancies no nymph can resist
 His lips, which he thinks all the Graces have kist.

MRS. FELIX.

Perfect knowledge of both your just picture has
 shown!—

The warmth of these Lovers diverts me, I own.

Of conquest each seems to himself very clear,
And feels from his rivals no diffident fear.
'Tis easy to see, from their satisfied air,
Each loves his own person much more than the Fair.
But, my poor gentle Coz wishes both at a distance ;
And I want to contrive, by your friendly assistance,
To relieve her, and quietly send them from hence
Without the Knight's knowledge.

M O R L E Y.

As neither wants sense,
Can't the Lady pronounce their dismissal at once,
Which none can mistake but an impudent dunce ?

M R S. F E L I X.

This measure seems easy indeed at first view ;
But, alas ! 'tis a measure we dare not pursue.
Our warm-hearted, whimsical, positive Knight,
Allows not to woman this natural right ;
And hence my young Friend, in a pitiful case,
Knows not how to reject what she ne'er can embrace ;
For nothing her Uncle's resentment could smother,
Should she banish one suitor, and not take the other.

M O R L E Y.

Then indeed I am griev'd for the Lady's distress ;
But how can I aid her ?

MRS. FELIX.

'Tis hard, I confess,
 To a sudden retreat this bold Pair to oblige,
 And make two such Heroes abandon a siege ;
 Yet I wish we could do it—and when they recede,
 The departure of both must appear their own deed.

MORLEY, *after a pause*.

Well—my friendship for you has suggested a scheme.

MRS. FELIX.

'Tis a service our hearts will for ever esteem.
 But what is your project ?

MORLEY.

Don't question me what,
 Lest you think me a fool for too simple a plot :
 'Tis simple, and yet I would venture my life
 It will drive from these Beaus all their thoughts of a Wife ;
 And if my scheme prospers, with joy I'll confess
 What a whimsical trifle produc'd our success.

MRS. FELIX.

Well, keep your own secret, if silence is best ;
 Tho' a woman, for once I'll in ignorance rest.—
 Here comes our friend Sapphic—he seems in a flurry.

MORLEY.

His step shews indeed a poetical hurry,

And

And we shall be call'd in as Gossips, fair neighbour,
For by the Bard's bustle his Muse is in labour.

Enter Sapphic.

S A P P H I C.

Dear Ma'am ! may I ask you for paper and ink,
Lest a fresh *jeu d'esprit* in oblivion should sink ?
For when my free fancy has brought forth my verse,
My treacherous memory proves a bad nurse.

M R S. F E L I X.

O pray ! for your Muse let us rear her young chit,
For the bantling, no doubt, must have spirit and wit ;
As a cradle to hold it I beg you'll take that,

(giving him a paper.)

And your Friend here will aid you in dressing the Brat ;
At a rite so important I merit no place,
And I beg to withdraw while you're washing its face.

[Exit.

S A P P H I C.

That's a charming gay creature—luxuriant and young—
But I've lost half a stanza—the deuce take her tongue ;—
Let me see—let me see if I can't recollect it—
'Tis done ;—and now, Morley, pray hear or inspect it.

M O R L E Y.

The Poet himself his own verse should recite.

S A P P H I C.

S A P P H I C.

You're a sensible fellow—your maxim is right.

(*Reads.*)

“Thy old Arcadia, Pan, resign,

“For this more rich retreat :

“A fairer nymph here decks thy shrine ;

“Be this thy fav'rite feat.”

Well, my Friend, won't this bring the old God out of
Greece ?

M O R L E Y.

Aye, and make good Sir Nicholas give you his Niece.

S A P P H I C.

Yes, I fancy this stanza will make the Girl mine.

M O R L E Y.

What Poet can wish for a prize more divine ?

I give you much joy on your conquest, my Friend ;

Yet the eyes of regret on your nuptials I bend,

And grieve in reflecting, that conjugal joy

Your poetical harvest of Fame must destroy.

S A P P H I C.

What the deuce do you mean ?

M O R L E Y.

To those great works

Which the world now expects with impatience from you.

The

The Poet when blest can no more be sublime,
And a chill matrimonial must strike thro' his rhyme.

S A P P H I C.

You're mistaken, dear Doctor—connubial delight
Will give a new zest to each poem I write ;
And you'll see such productions !—

M O R L E Y.

'Tis true, now and then
Polemics by marriage have quicken'd their pen.
A Dutch Critic, I know, by the aid of his Wife,
Made a book and a child every year of his life.
But total seclusion from Venus and Bacchus,
Is, you know, to the Bard recommended by Flaccus.
A grand epic poem I hear you are writing ;
'Tis a work that your country will take great de-
light in :
But consider, my Friend, when you're deep in heroics,
As Poets have not all the patience of Stoics,
How you'll grieve to be check'd in the flow of your
verse,
By a young squalling child and an old scolding nurse ;
E'en the qualms of your Lady may drive from your
brain
Fine thoughts that you ne'er can recover again ;

Reflect

Reflect how you'll feel, with such hopes of succeeding,
If your Muse should miscarry because your Wife's
breeding.

S A P P H I C.

Egad, in that case I should think my fate hard.

M O R L E Y.

I myself have beheld an unfortunate Bard,
Who his nails for a rhyme unsuccessfully bit,
When family cares had extinguish'd his wit. —
With many who sing in the Muse's full choir,
It would do them no mischief to muffle their lyre ;
But for you, whom the Nine, with tender presage,
Are prepar'd to proclaim the first Bard of our age ;
For you, who of Taste are the favourite theme —

S A P P H I C.

Yes, I think I stand high in the public esteem.

M O R L E Y.

For you, I should grieve if domestic delight
On your fair rising laurels should fall as a blight.
'Tis the pride of great minds, whom the Muses inflame,
To sacrifice joy on the altar of Fame :
Your passion's renown — of this Girl are you fonder ? —
On this delicate point I must leave you to ponder ;
Consider it, while I attend the old Knight. [Exit.

S A P P H I C.

SAPPHIC, *alone (after a pause.)*

By Jove, I believe my friend Morley is right.
 Thou, Fame, art my Mistress ; to win thee I sing.
 This Girl, tho' she's handsome, is but a dull thing.
 'Tis clear, whensoever I a poem rehearse,
 That she has no relish for elegant verse.—
 Her fortune indeed would be rather convenient,
 But the glorious, to me, is before the expedient.
 Egad, I'd quit Venus herself, if I knew
 That the system of Morley was certainly true.
 I don't think the Girl to Decisive inclin'd ;
 But here comes her Maid, who may tell me her mind.

Enter Jenny.

My good little Jenny, you're trusty and true,
 And your Mistress, I know, tells her secrets to you.
 What you know, to a friend you may safely impart,
 And give me a perfect account of her heart :
 Pray how do I stand in your Lady's regard ?

J E N N Y.

Now's my time to be even with this saucy Bard.

(aside.)

To be sure, Sir, the taste of my Lady is odd ;
 But poetry moves her no more than a clod.

SAPPHIC.

S A P P H I C.

What ! no relish for rhyme !—Does she never repeat
The soft little sonnets I've laid at her feet ?

J E N N Y.

Ah, Sir ! would my Mistress were once of my mind,
(For I read all the verses of yours that I find) ;
But my Lady's so cruel she thwarts my desire,
And to hide them from me throws them into the fire.

S A P P H I C.

She's a fool—she's a fool (*aside.*)—I should have a
fine life,
With such a prosaic dull jade of a wife.

J E N N Y.

But, my good Sir, I hope you will not be dejected,
I could tell you by whom all your wit is respected.
There's a heart upon which you have made such im-
pression—
But I must not betray her by my indiscretion.

S A P P H I C.

Whom d'ye mean, my good Jenny ? come, tell me,
my dear.

J E N N Y.

You would make a bad use of the secret, I fear.—

Now I hope I shall lead the Bard into a scrape, (*aside.*)
For he bites like a Gudgeon, and cannot escape.

S A P P H I C.

Come, say who's in love with me—if she is fair,
I'll not leave the dear creature, I vow, to despair.

J E N N Y.

O lud ! I protest she is coming this way ;
But I did not intend her regard to betray.
I must fly—but I beg that you'll not be too free.

[*Exit.*

S A P P H I C.

Madam Felix !—I thought she was partial to me.

Enter Mrs. Felix.

M R S. F E L I X.

May I enter without incommoding the Muse ?

S A P P H I C.

By a question like this your own charms you abuse.
Those eyes, my dear Madam, were form'd, I profess,
To inspirit a Poet, and not to depress ;
From your presence he surely must catch inspiration.

M R S. F E L I X.

A very poetical fine salutation !
But I seriously beg, if you're busy with rhyme,
That you will not allow me to take up your time.

As

As I'm not Selina, you're free from restriction,
And may tell me plain truths, unembellish'd with fiction.

S A P P H I C.

Then I swear, my dear creature, I swear by this hand,
That I feel as I touch it my genius expand ;
That your lips—O by Jove ! he's a madman or booby,
Who roves to the Indies for diamond or ruby ;
And each vein in my heart his strange folly condemns,
Who leaves these more bright and more exquisite gems.
Sweet Fair ! let me keep, while their richness I praise,
The cold damp of neglect from o'erclouding their rays.

*(While Mr. Sapphic kisses Mrs. Felix with great
vehemence, Jenny enters unperceived.)*

J E N N Y.

O ho !—have I caught you ? impertinent Poet !
This is more than I hop'd for—my Master shall know
it. [Exit.

M R S. F E L I X.

Good God ! Mr. Sapphic, what frantic illusion
Has produc'd this ridiculous scene of confusion !
All Poets are Quixotes in love, I am told ;
And the truth of the adage in you I behold.
As the Knight once mistook an old mill for a giant,
Your sense as disorder'd, your fancy as pliant,

Takes

Takes me for my Cousin—your love's ebullition
 I only can pardon on this supposition.
 I fain would suppose that no insult was meant,
 Nor believe you could think, what I ought to resent.

S A P P H I C.

O! talk not of anger, with lips that inspire
 The strongest sensation of rapturous fire,
 That with love's sweet convulsions shake every nerve;
 O! think not that I your resentment deserve;
 Because my warm heart, thus engross'd by your
 charms,
 Is ambitious of filling these dear empty arms.
 No, let me, while basking beneath your bright eye,
 The place of a thankless deserter supply;
 And in this melting breast kindle ecstasy's flame,
 Which Nature design'd for so glowing a frame.

M R S. F E L I X.

Away, Sir!—and since in your fondling insanity
 You reject the excuse which I form'd for your vanity,
 My threats must inform you—

S A P P H I C.

O! frown not, sweet creature;
 Let not wrath spoil the charm of thy every feature.

MRS. FELIX.

Regain you your sense—from my wrath you are free,
Which should not be rais'd by a being like thee ;
Begone then !—my pardon in vain you'll implore,
If you dare on this subject to breathe a word more.

SAPPHIC.

Words, indeed, my warm fair one, by Nature's confession,
For the love that I feel are no proper expression ;
The soul's fond intent in soft murmurs should swell,
And kisses explain what no language can tell.
Ye Gods, how luxuriant !

MRS. FELIX.

Away ! quit my arm !
Or my cries in an instant the house shall alarm.

SAPPHIC.

Provoking sweet creature !—indulge my fond passion ;
Come, come, don't I know you're a woman of fashion ?
Your coyness, I've heard, you can sometimes give
over ;

And I'm sure you're too wise to be true to a rover.
Besides, I have learnt, that with partial regard
You have cast a kind eye on your ill-treated Bard.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

Away ! thou vain coxcomb ! nor, base as thou art,
 Insult the bright Lord of so loyal a heart ;
 Begone !— I abhor thee—my person release !—

SIR NICHOLAS, *entering*.

Is it thus, my young Sir, you pay court to my Niece ?

SAPPHIC.

Confusion ! What devil has sent the old Knight ?

SIR NICHOLAS.

How dare you, pert stripling, almost in my sight
 To insult a chaste female that's under my roof ?—
 But since of your baseness you give me such proof,
 You shall feel it repaid by a proper correction.

SAPPHIC (*aside*.)

Deuce take this perverse and unlucky detection :
 I wish I had wisely, as Morley had taught me,
 Renounc'd that jade Venus before he thus caught me.
 What excuse can I make him ?——(*To Sir Nicholas*) My dear worthy Sir,

Tho' I now seem most justly your wrath to incur,]
 Yet as you grow cool, your opinion will vary,
 You will not resent such an idle vagary,
 A mere romping frolic—

SIR NICHOLAS.

A frolic, d'ye say!

Then a frolic of mine shall your frolic repay.—
 Call our servants to punish this frolicsome spark,
 They shall drag him across the new pond in the park.

SAPPHIC (*aside.*)

'Tis what he can't mean—yet his countenance such is,
 I wish from my soul I was out of his clutches.—

(*To Sir Nicholas.*)

Dear Sir, I assure you, I'm griev'd beyond measure
 That I thus have awaken'd your furious displeasure;
 When calmer—

SIR NICHOLAS.

Young man, I am not in a fury,
 A sentence more just never came from a jury;
 Such frolics as yours have Old England disgrac'd:
 In high life let them flourish as fashion and taste.
 To those wanton young fellows I am not severe,
 Who attack the loose Wife of a vain gambling Peer.
 My Lady, whose Lord wastes at Hazard the night,
 May plead to more generous pleasures some right;
 I care not how each keeps their conjugal oath,
 Since honour and peace must be strangers to both.

But

But when a brave Soldier, pure Glory's true son,
Ennobled with laurels laboriously won ;
When risking in far distant climates his life,
To his Country he leaves a fair innocent Wife ;
Accurst be the man, who to friendship unjust,
Fails to guard as his soul this most delicate trust ;
Or to punish those fops who insult her chaste beauty,
And invite her to swerve from her honour and duty.
Of the doom that I think to such libertines due,
I will give to the world an example in you.
Our old English discipline, Ducking, by name,
Shall atone for your outrage, by quenching your flame.
Here ! William and John—

MRS. FELIX.

For my sake, I intreat
That you will not, dear Sir, this rough vengeance
complete.

SIR NICHOLAS.

By Jupiter, Cousin, to make him less fond,
He shall croak out his love to the frogs of our
pond.—

Here, William ! tell Jack after Stephen to skip,
And tell the old Huntsman to come with his whip,

Then wait all together around the hall door.

S A P P H I C.

O mercy, dear Sir ! I your mercy implore,
You will not destroy me ?

S I R N I C H O L A S.

No, only correct,
And teach you a brave Soldier's Wife to respect,

M R S. F E L I X.

Yet think, my dear Cousin, yet think, for my sake,
What a noise this ridiculous matter will make.

You know that my Felix's nature is such,
He don't wish his Wife to be talk'd of too much ;
His honour and quiet let us make our care,
And bury in silence this foolish affair :
Perhaps, in my manners too easy and gay,
My levity led the young Poet astray.

S I R N I C H O L A S.

No, no ! my good creature, you must not arraign
Your innocent self in a business so plain :
Besides, his offence by this plea cannot sink,
For they are the worst of all puppies that think
Each woman's a wanton who is not precise,
And that cheerfulness must be the herald of vice.

M R S.

MRS. FELIX.

Howe'er this may be—as he's now all repentance,
I earnestly beg a repeal of your sentence.

SAPPHIC.

Dear Ma'am I adore you for this intercession;
And I trust the good Knight will forgive my transgression.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well, Sir, as beyond your desert you're befriended
By that virtue which you have so grossly offended,
You are free to depart; but remember, young swain,
That you ne'er touch the Wife of a Soldier again.

SAPPHIC.

If I do, may I die by the wind of a ball!
Heaven bless you, good folks, and this sociable hall!
Since my amorous folly your friendship thus loses,
My amours shall henceforth be confin'd to the Muses.

[Exit.

MRS. FELIX.

I thank you, dear Sir, and rejoice in my heart
'That in safety you've suffer'd this youth to depart.

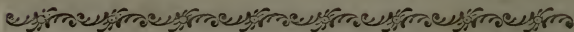
SIR NICHOLAS.

By Jupiter, Coz, I had cool'd your warm Poet,
Had I not been afraid all our neighbours might know it,

And make you the subject of such conversation
As I think your nice Colonel would hear with vexa-
tion.

Then, since for your sake I have let the Bard go,
Come and aid me to settle all matters below :
That my anxious cares in her comfort may cease,
I'm resolv'd young Decisive shall marry my Niece.

End of A C T II.



A C T III.

S C E N E I.

Enter Mrs. Felix and Selina.

MRS. FELIX.

WELL, my dear, what d'ye think of our me-
dical friend,

Whom the letters of Felix so highly commend ?

If my gratitude does not my judgment mislead,

He's the man in the world who with you might suc-
ceed ;

Tho'

Tho' gentle, yet manly, tho' bashful, polite:
Are you not half in love?—

SELINA.

Yes, indeed, at first sight!—

His service to you on my heart is engrav'd,
And I love him, I own, for the life he has sav'd.
To win me perhaps he might not find it hard,
So esteem'd as he is by the friends I regard;
But I fancy such thoughts will not enter his brain:
And for my part, instead of attracting a swain,
I only shall think, as they heartily vex me,
Of escaping from those who already perplex me.

MRS. FELIX.

O make yourself easy, I pray, on that head;
In the deepest disgrace the poor Poet is fled,
And I trust that the Critic will soon share his fate.
Come with me—I've a most curious tale to relate.
Let us haste—I perceive that Decisive is near,
In whose present discourse I would not interfere.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Decisive and Morley.

DECISIVE.

So while in the grove I was coolly projecting
New plans for the temple the Knight is erecting,

Our

Our Poet, addicted to amorous sin,
 Grew a little too fond of the Ladies within :
 But discovery happen'd his passion to damp ;
 And this is the cause of his haste to decamp.

MORLEY.

The old Knight, I believe, such resentment express'd
 As quicken'd the speed of his fugitive guest ;
 On Terror's swift wing he is certainly flown,
 And as he has retreated, the field is your own.

DECISIVE.

As a rival I had not much fear of poor Sapphic ;
 Bad rhyme's current coin in most amorous traffic,
 But would not pass here.

MORLEY.

I think not in your view,
 As it finds such a critical touchstone in you.
 The Poet's dismissal your triumph ensures,
 And the prize, my good friend, is now certainly yours ;
 A prize, that we justly may call very great,
 A lovely sweet girl with a noble estate.

DECISIVE.

The girl's very well, but knows nothing of life ;
 It will cost me some pains to new model my Wife ;

But I think she will gladly receive my correction,
And my wealthy old kinsman approves the connection.

(*Coughs.*)

MORLEY.

You've a cough, my good friend.

DECISIVE.

Yes, a trifling one: *Hem!*

Have you got any Indian prescription for phlegm?

MORLEY.

Believe me, that cough is no trifling affair;

It calls, I assure you, for caution and care.

With regret I point out so unpleasant a truth,

But your constitution I've known from your youth;

Your hectic appearance I see with concern,

As I know, with your frame, if health takes such a turn,

The least indiscretion your life may destroy.

The slightest excess in diversion and joy;

Even those tender cares, which on life's purest plan

Must belong to the state of a Family Man,

May lead to disease from which art cannot save,

And rapidly hurry you into the grave.

'Twere better this courtship of yours should miscarry,

For you'll certainly die in six months if you marry.

DECISIVE.

D E C I S I V E.

Are you serious, dear Doctor?

M O R L E Y.

By such a sad end

I lately have lost a poor good-humour'd friend.

You remember Jack Dangle at College, no doubt ;

He was just of your age, and a little more stout ;

He, with other young sages, left Westminster Hall

To teach English law to the slaves of Bengal.

But Jack, in his new chamber-practice at least,

'Too eagerly follow'd the rules of the East.

A bad cough ensu'd, much like yours in its sound—

(Decisive coughs.)

Good God ! I could swear 'twas poor Jack under
ground,

'Tis his tone so exactly, sepulchral and hollow !

'The system he slighted I hope you will follow.

With pains in his breast he was sharply tormented ;

But as he at first to my guidance consented,

Some time my strict regimen kept him alive,

Poor Dangle once more was beginning to thrive ;

And had he some months in my plan persever'd,

On the earth at this moment he might have appear'd ;

But

But chance threw a pretty white girl in his way,
And eager for marriage, fond Jack would not stay :
In vain I conjur'd him to wait half a year,
And shew'd him the danger he ran very clear.
He thought the remains of his cough but a trifle,
And, being unable his passion to stifle,
He took his fair wife ;—but, alas ! the vile cough
Encreas'd every day till it carried him off !

DECISIVE.

I don't recollect any pain in my breast,
But I feel a strange tightness just now in my chest.

MORLEY.

How's your stomach ?

DECISIVE.

I've nothing to fear on that score.

MORLEY.

Do you eat as you did ?

DECISIVE.

Yes, I think rather more,

MORLEY.

That ravenous hunger's the thing that I dread.
How d'ye sleep ?

DECISIVE.

All the time that I pass in my bed.

MORLEY.

MORLEY.

Indeed?—I don't like so lethargic a slumber.

DECISIVE.

Why! my friend! of good symptoms these rank in
the number.

MORLEY.

Alas! you may call them all good if you please,
By that title you only confirm your disease,
In which tho' the patient declines very fast,
He for ever will flatter himself to the last.
Believe me, your symptoms are rather alarming,
Yet your present disorder there is not much harm in,
If you can but abstain, with a spirit resign'd,
From all that may harrafs your body or mind.
To a different climate I wish you'd repair.
And for one winter breathe a less changeable air.
Spend a Christmas at Naples, and when you return
You may marry without any anxious concern.
But you're now at that critical period of life
When, in such frames as yours, nature feels an odd
strife,
And, if quiet does not all her functions befriend,
The short earthly scene on a sudden will end.
On a point so important you'll pardon my freedom.

DECISIVE.

D E C I S I V E.

Your cautions oblige me, I feel that I need 'em,
 For in truth I am growing as thin as a rabbit,
 And there's something consumptive I know in my habit.
 My father died soon after taking a wife,
 And cough'd out his soul when I jump'd into life :
 I suppose I am going.

M O R L E Y.

Take courage, my friend ;
 On your own prudent conduct your life will depend.
 If you take but due care for two years, I'll engage
 You will stand a fair chance for a healthy old age.
 Nor would I advise you this girl to refuse,
 A distant attachment your mind will amuse ;
 And, no doubt, for a man of your fortune and figure
 She will wait till your health has recover'd its vigour.

D E C I S I V E.

I can part with the girl without feeling a chasm
 In my heart ; that will shake with no amorous spasm ;
 For, to tell you the truth, my old rich Uncle Cob
 Is more eager than I for this marrying job.
 By this scheme the old blade is supremely delighted,
 Because two large manors may thus be united :

But

But when of his park, I've extended the bound,
 It will do me small good if I sink under ground ;
 And I'm not such a fool, in these projects of pelf,
 To humour my friends and endanger myself.

M O R L E Y.

Indeed I'd not wed for an old Uncle's whim ;—
 But here comes our Knight, I shall leave you with him,
 As I think you've some delicate points to adjust. [*Exit.*

D E C I S I V E, *alone.*

I'm in no haste to sleep with my Ancestors' dust.
 'Tis wiser my weak constitution to save,
 Than to marry, and so travel post to the grave.

Enter Sir Nicholas.

S I R N I C H O L A S.

Come, give me your hand, and rejoice, my young
 neighbour,
 You're the man that's to order the pipe and the fabor ;
 And by Jove we'll all dance on so joyous a day :
 Your wedding, dear Dick, shall be speedy and gay ;
 For your rival is gone with our serious displeasure,
 And I give to your wishes my young lovely treasure.
 A treasure she is, tho' the girl is my niece ;
 Heaven grant ye long years of affection and peace !

And

And a fine chopping boy ere the end of the first—
Remember that I am to see the rogue nurs'd.
Go, you happy young dog, go and seal with a kiss,
And teach the old hall to re-echoe your blifs.
As I know on this match what Sir Jacob intends,
And we can so well trust each other as friends,
Short contracts will answer as well as the best,
Our lawyers at leisure may finish the rest.
I know all suspense in such cases is hard,
And you shall not, I swear, from your blifs be debarr'd,
While o'er acres of parchment they're crawling like
snails.

D E C I S I V E.

Dear Sir, upon weighing in Reason's just scales
Your very great favours, and my weak pretension,
I find I'm unworthy of such condescension,
And must, with regret, the high honour resign,
Which I once vainly thought might with justice be
mine.

S I R N I C H O L A S.

Hey-day ! what does all this formality mean ?
Why, Dick ! has the Devil possess'd you with spleen ?
Or has love made your mind thus with diffidence sore ?
False modesty ne'er was your foible before.

You think you're unworthy !—the thought is so new,
 That I hardly can tell what to say or to do.
 If you love the good girl full as much as you said,
 I think you have very just claims to her bed ;
 But if your mind's chang'd, and you feel your love lighter,
 'Tis better to say so, than marry and flight her :
 And if this be the case, Sir, you have your release ;
 For altho' I am eager to marry my Niece,
 Tho' I'm partial to you, yet I beg you to note,
 That I don't want to cram her down any man's throat.

D E C I S I V E.

I'm truly convinc'd of the Lady's perfection,
 And 'twould please me, dear Sir, to preserve the connection,
 Tho' now, by particular reasons, I'm led
 To revisit the Continent once ere I wed.
 In the time of my absence I can't be exact ;
 But in what form you please I will freely contract,
 In the course of two years to receive as my Wife—

S I R N I C H O L A S.

Do you mean to insult me, you puppy ? Od's-life !
 Ere I'd tie my dear girl to so silly a fop
 For life, I'd condemn her to trundle a mop.

And

And let me advise you, young man, for the future,
To know your own mind ere you go as a suitor.

DECISIVE.

I perceive, Sir; my presence grows irksome to you,
And you'll therefore allow me to bid you adieu.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Your departure, indeed, I don't wish to restrain,
And have little concern when I see you again.

[*Exit Decisive.*]

SIR NICHOLAS *alone.*

What can make this pert puppy recede from his suit?
My fair Cousin and he have scarce had a dispute;
She would hardly affront him on purpose to vex me!—
Here she comes to explain all the points that perplex me.

Enter Mrs. Felix.

Well, Cousin, my scheme, for a wedding's suspended,
The Beaux are both gone, and their courtship is ended;
With an air so mysterious Decisive withdraws,
I a little suspect you're concern'd as the cause:
Confess, have you had any words with this Youth?

MRS. FELIX.

Not I, my dear Sir, on my honour and truth.
But I'm ready to own, that the news you impart
With surprize and with pleasure enlivens my heart.

I think your sweet Niece has a lucky escape :
 I would almost as soon see her marry an ape
 As her union with one of these coxcombs behold ;
 The Bard is too warm, and the Critic too cold.

SIR NICHOLAS.

I find that they are not such lads as I thought 'em ;
 The world all the worst of its fashions has taught 'em :
 And the world is indeed at a very fine pass,
 When such puppies insult so attractive a lass.
 Young fellows of fortune now think it hard duty
 To pay a chaste homage to Virtue and Beauty.
 But I'll leave these pert fops to their own vile caprice,
 And soon find a much fitter match for my Niece.
 Other orders of men for a husband I'll search,
 And I think I can settle my girl in the Church.

MRS. FELIX.

Lord, Cousin ! I thought you detested the Cloth !

SIR NICHOLAS.

Our Rector, I own, often kindles my wrath ;
 But all Parsons are not like my neighbour, old Squabble,
 Who has learnt from his geese both to hiss and to gobble.
 We have in our neighbourhood three young Divines,
 And each, I believe, to Selina inclines,

Our

Our Bishop's smart nephew deserves a sweet wench,
 He himself in due time may be rais'd to the Bench ;
 With him I should like very well to unite her ;
 And if he hereafter should rise to the Mitre,
 Then perhaps we together may bring to perfection
 A much-wanted plan for the Church's correction.

MRS. FELIX.

A very fine scheme, which you'll manage, no doubt !

SIR NICHOLAS.

More wonderful things I have known brought about ;
 And tho' my first plan, as you see, has miscarried,
 I'm resolv'd that my Niece shall be speedily married.
 I'll unite the good girl to a Priest, if I'm able ;
 For the young Olive Branch never fails at his table:
 There is one I prefer—but to leave the girl free,
 I allow her to make a fair choice of the three :
 I shall therefore invite the whole group to the hall,
 And I'll now go and make her write cards to them all.

[Exit.

MRS. FELIX *alone*,

What a wonderful creature is this worthy Knight !
 To make others happy is all his delight !
 Yet, misled by some wild philanthropic illusion,
 He's for ever involv'd in odd scenes of confusion.

'Tis well that our Critic has made his last bow,
I rejoice he's remov'd, and I long to know how.

Enter Morley.

M O R L E Y.

Thank my stars, my dear Ma'am, I've dispatch'd your
commission;
Your sweet friend is, I hope, in a tranquil condi-
tion;

From her two irksome lovers she now is reliev'd.

M R S. F E L I X.

And I'm dying to know how all this was achiev'd.
Come tell me, good creature, how could you ef-
fect it?

M O R L E Y.

By a project so simple you'd never suspect it;
I have banish'd both swains, by declaring a wife
Would rob one of glory, and t'other of life.
I perswaded the Bard his poetical fame
Could never exist with a conjugal flame;
Hence he grew with your charms so licentiously free,
But forgive me this ill, which I could not foresee.
Decisive, more wisely, abandons the Fair
To make his own lungs his particular care.

M R S.

MRS. FELIX.

What ! on such points as these have they taken your
word ?

MORLEY.

Dear Madam ! mankind credit things most absurd,
When they come from the mouth of a medical man ;
Hence Mountebanks never want skill to trepan.
The extent of our empire indeed there's no seeing,
When we act on the fears of a true selfish being.

MRS. FELIX.

How simple soever the means you've employ'd,
You have remedy'd ills by which we were annoy'd.
Having thus clear'd the scene from each troublesome
lover,

Can you not for the nymph a fit husband discover ?
You see how she's prest by her Uncle to wed,
Who ne'er quits a scheme he once takes in his head.—
Suppose her kind fancy should lean towards you,
Is your heart quite as free as I'm sure 'twould be true ?
Is it not pre-engag'd ?

MORLEY.

As in mirth's sportive fally
It pleases you thus a poor pilgrim to rally,

Your good-nature, I know, will forgive me if I
 To your pleasantry make a too serious reply.
 'Tis my maxim to speak, whatsoe'er be the theme,
 With a heart undisguis'd, to the friends I esteem :
 Had I all India's wealth, 'twould be my inclination
 To offer it all to your lovely relation.
 But supposing it possible you could be willing
 To unite her with one who is scarce worth a shilling ;
 Believe me, dear Madam, my pride is too great
 To wish her to stoop to my humble estate.

MRS. FELIX.

Such pride, tho' it rests upon no strong foundation,
 Is noble I own, and deserves admiration.
 I call it ill-founded, because, in my mind,
 If there's fortune enough for a couple when join'd,
 If talents and worth are by each duly shar'd,
 If in all other points they are equally pair'd,
 And mutual regard mutual merit enhances,
 It signifies not which supply'd their finances.

MORLEY,

Your pardon—how often, when fortune's unequal,
 Gay weddings produce a most turbulent sequel ?
 But could I once hope your sweet Cousin to gain,
 How many things are there such hopes to restrain ?

Suppose

Suppose your dear Colonel, my most noble friend,
Whom success to your arms may more speedily send !
Suppose, having clos'd the bright work he has plan'd,
His return from the East he should hasten by land ;
Suppose him arriv'd, with what face could I meet
The man whom my heart should exultingly greet,
If he found me attempting, in spite of my station.
To wed, tho' a beggar, your wealthy relation ?

MRS. FELIX,

From these words, my dear friend, which I almost
adore,

And a few slighter hints that escap'd you before,
I have caught a quick hope, which is fraught with
delight,

That I soon shall be blest with my Felix's sight :
I begin to suspect he's in England already ;
I perceive that you can't keep your countenance steady.
With his usual attention his love has reflected
How my poor foolish nerves by surprize are affected ;
And, lest they should fail me beyond all revival,
Has sent you to prepare for his wish'd-for arrival.

Am I right in my guess ? Is he not very near ?
Could I trust my own heart, I should think Felix here.

COLONEL.

COLONEL FELIX, *entering*.

Sweet foreboder, behold him restor'd to your arms.

MRS. FELIX.

O my Felix! this transport o'er pays all alarms,
Thus to see thee restor'd, and ennobled with fame!
In what words shall affection thy welcome proclaim?

COLONEL.

My Love! my best Treasure! than glory more dear!
The bliss of this meeting, which shines in thy tear,
That we owe to this friend let us never forget.

MORLEY.

My share in your transport o'er pays all the debt—
But, Colonel, your fondness has travell'd full speed,
And has not allow'd me the time you agreed.

COLONEL.

I meant not, indeed, to have join'd you to-day,
But I found love forbade my intended delay.

MORLEY.

Well, my duty is done, now you happily meet;
Heaven bless you together—

MRS. FELIX.

Stay, stay, I entreat:
You must not go yet; and before you depart
I will open to Felix the scheme of my heart.

SELINA (*behind the scene.*)

Indeed, Sir, I never can write such a card.

SIR NICHOLAS (*behind the scene.*)

Then you'll forfeit at once my paternal regard!

COLONEL.

Hey-day! in the house I much fear something's wrong,
As Sir Nicholas talks in a language so strong.

MRS. FELIX.

Does he know you are here?

COLONEL.

No, my dear, I think not,
Unless he the tidings from Jenny has got;
She alone saw me come, and without much ado
Most kindly directed me where to find you.

MRS. FELIX.

They are coming this way—let's withdraw all together,
And contrive how to turn this loud storm to fair
weather. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Sir Nicholas and Selina.

SIR NICHOLAS.

I insist on your writing such cards to them all!

SELINA.

Dear Uncle, I beg you'll this order recall.

You

You know your commands I much wish to obey ;
 But reflect on this matter what people will say :
 You're so eager to marry your Niece, they will swear
 That you hawk her about just like goods at a fair.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well, my dear, let'em say so, and I'll say so too,
 For your simile proves what a guardian should do.
 He who wants to dispose of a tender young maid,
 May take a good hint from the gingerbread trade :
 If he has any sense, 'twill be ever his plan
 To part with soft pastry as soon as he can ;
 For egad an old maid is like old harden'd paste,
 You may cry it about, but nobody will taste.
 Come, do as I bid you, and take up your pen.

SELINA.

Lord, Sir ! it will seem very odd to these men ;
 You will make me appear in a horrible light ;
 I vow my hand shakes so, I never can write,
 Excuse me, dear Sir, from this business, pray do,
 And let me live single for ever with you.

SIR NICHOLAS.

All business where woman's concern'd, I believe,
 Must partake of the curse from our grandmother Eve.

All

All her daughters the steps of their parent have follow'd!

Contradiction, the core of the apple she swallow'd,
In their veins still fermenting new ills can produce,
And all their blood seems coloquintida juice.—
You froward cross baggage! your word should I take,
And bid you live single five years for my sake,
Of the barbarous Uncle you'd quickly complain,
Who from nature's just right a young girl wou'd
restrain!

SELINA.

Indeed, Sir, I should not.

SIR NICHOLAS.

I tell you you wou'd.

From perverseness alone you oppose your own good.
'Tis only to thwart me, because I desire
To see you well settled before I expire,
That you now, with your soft hypocritical carriage,
Affect to have no inclination to marriage.
But you'll never contrive, tho' your tongue may be
nimble,
To convince me your heart is as cold as your thimble.
I know of what stuff froward damsels are made;
The guardian must force you, who cannot persuade.

That

That you'll like a good husband, I never can doubt ;
 And married you shall be before the month's out,
 Or at least your kind Uncle no more you shall teaze,
 But may e'en go to Rome and turn nun if you please.

SELINA (*aside.*)

I have lost all the love he has shewn me for years ;
 If I strive to reply I shall burst into tears.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Come, answer me, Miss ! will you scribble or not ?

Enter the Colonel, Mrs. Felix, and Morley.

COLONEL.

My worthy old friend, what can make you so hot ?

SIR NICHOLAS.

Ha, Colonel !—you find me a little concern'd—

But I'm heartily glad you are safely return'd.

Your arrival indeed is a welcome surprize,

Tho' before you your fame a bright harbinger flies ;

We have heard your success, and we all triumph in it.

COLONEL.

I trust I am come in a fortunate minute

To make all your present embarrassment cease,

For I bring a young husband, my friend, for your
 Niece.

SIR

SIR NICHOLAS.

Egad, that's well said ; and I'm fure it's well meant ;
And if he's like you he shall have my consent.

COLONEL.

He has many more virtues, and just as much wealth,
And from India brings home both his morals and health.
Here, my friend, is the man.—As I owe him my life,
I wish to present him so lovely a wife ;
Half my fortune is his—here I freely declare it,
And have only to hope that Selina may share it.
I've regarded her long as a child of my own ;
Nor can my affection more truly be shown,
Than by wishing to place the dear girl in the arms
Of the friend whose rare virtues are worthy her charms.

MORLEY.

Dear generous Felix, I'm quite overcome,
Thy bounty is such, it strikes gratitude dumb !

COLONEL.

This was ever, my friend, my most settled intention,
Though my very just purpose I chose not to mention,
From the hope I should find, what I gladly embrace,
A moment from which it may borrow some grace,
When my gift its plain value may rise far above,
By the aid it affords to the wishes of love ;

And

And I own, as a prophet I'm proud of my art,
Now I see the effects of her charms on your heart.

MORLEY.

O Felix ! can I thus deprive thy free spirit
Of wealth, the reward of heroical merit ?
Can I the victorious Commander despoil
Of what he has purchas'd with danger and toil ?
Should love and delight on thy present attend,
I could never be happy in robbing a friend.
No, I still must decline—

SIR NICHOLAS.

My dear boy, say no more ;
You're the match that I never could meet with before.
I have long sought in vain for an heir to my mind,
But all my soul wish'd, in your spirit I find.
You shall *not* rob your friend of a single * Gold Moor,
He can raise heirs enough to inherit his store :
To such men as himself let him haste to give birth,
And with twenty young Felix's garnish the earth.
How trifling soever your fortune may be,
From the Colonel's esteem, and the virtues I see,
I think you as noble a match for my Niece,
As I could, had you brought home a new golden fleece :

* An Indian Coin.

I have

I have money enough, if you're rich in affection.—
 As I always have talk'd of an equal connection,
 My neighbours, perhaps, may suppose my sight dim,
 Or mock my wife choice as a generous whim :
 Let them study with zeal, which I hope may succeed,
 Of their horses and dogs to improve the best breed ;
 A study more noble engrosses my mind,
 To preserve the first points in the breed of mankind :
 On the heart and the soul, as the first points, I dwell,
 In these, my dear Children, you match mighty well ;
 And I think human nature in debt to my care,
 For uniting two mortals who happily pair.

COLONEL.

Your hand, my dear Knight, it is gloriously said !

SIR NICHOLAS.

By Juno, we'll put the young Couple to bed !

We'll have no dull delays.—

MRS. FELIX.

Now what say you, my dear
 Are these orders for marriage too quick and severe ?

MORLEY.

My amazement and gratitude both are extreme,
 But my voice seems oppress'd in a heavenly dream ;

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Though

Though your kindness is greater than language can paint,
I beg this fair hand may be free from constraint.

SIR NICHOLAS.

From constraint!—Gad, if now she affects to demur,
I can tell her my wrath she will so far incur,
She shall go to a convent for life, or at least
Be sent as a venture herself to the East.

SELINA.

My Uncle I long have obey'd, and at present
I cannot complain his commands are unpleasant:
Nay more; could he place all mankind in my view,
And bid me chuse from them, my choice would be you.

MORLEY.

To this dear declaration my life must reply,
All words are too weak—

SIR NICHOLAS.

The whole earth I defy,
To shew me a scene more delightful than this;
Dear honest frank Girl, come and give me a kiss;
Thou'rt the creature of Nature much more than of Art,
And I own thee again as the Child of my heart.

JONATHAN, *entering and speaking to the Colonel.*

There are two chests for you, Sir, just come to the hall.

COLONEL.

A few Indian things for the Ladies—that's all.

Pray,

Pray, Jonathan, pay those who brought them with
this. *(giving money.)*

MORLEY.

My brave lad must share in our general bliss.
Here Jonathan, if you're to marriage inclin'd,
And can luckily meet with a girl to your mind,
You may marry and settle, as soon as you please;
The Colonel has taken good care of your ease.

JONATHAN.

God bless him, whate'er he is pleas'd to bestow!
I think I have found a kind sweetheart below.

MRS. FELIX.

He has made choice of Jenny;—and I will provide
A fortune, my Friend, for your good-humour'd Bride.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Egad, they shall have my new farm on the hill,
And raise young recruits there as fast as they will.

JONATHAN.

Heaven prosper you all! I will pray for you ever,
And to serve my King still, as I can, I'll endeavour.

[Exit.]

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well said, honest Soldier;—we'll have no delay,
Go and tell the old Parson to keep in the way.

COLONEL.

Come with me, fair Cousin, examine my chests;
I long to present you a few bridal vests.

MRS. FELIX, *to* Morley.

As we view with delight the events of to-day,
A fair lesson, my Friend, in your fate we survey;
While, from love to an aged fond parent, with speed
From wealth's open road you most kindly recede,
Heaven sends you that fortune you nobly have flighted,
And your warm filial piety here is requited;
This bright moral truth by your lot is express'd,
They who seek others' bliss, are by Providence blest.

SIR NICHOLAS, *to* Morley.

Here, my worthy young Friend, take and cherish this
Fair,

And, trust me, you'll find her deserving your care;
For although of her sex she may have a small spice,
She'll please you ten times where she vexes you twice.
And happy the man, in this skirmishing life,
Who is able to say half as much of his Wife.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

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